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A HISTORY OF MODERN ENGLAND

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BY

HERBERT PAUL

IN FIVE VOLUMES

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INTRODUCTION

The dramatic close of Sir Robert Peel's official career marks a turning-point in English history. It broke up political parties, and disorganised public life. Toryism disappeared for a generation, and for some years the Whigs held the field as the only possible Government. No Minister ever had a more glorious fall. Sir Robert Peel left office (power he could not leave) with an alacrity equal to Falstaff's. But he did not sink. He fell to rise, and that immediately, upon the crest of the wave. He has himself described the final scene in a letter to his intimate friend, Lord Hardinge, then Governor-General of India, which has become justly famous. "The moment," he wrote on the 4th of July 1846, "the moment when success was ensured, and I had the satisfaction of seeing two drowsy masters in Chancery mumble out at the table of the House of Commons that the Lords had passed the Corn and Customs Bills, I was satisfied." He might well be satisfied. He had restored the finances of his country, which, when he became Prime Minister in 1841, were in great and grievous peril. By the simple expedient of Free Trade he had given the people bread, putting, as Mr. Bright said long afterwards, the Lord's Prayer into an Act of Parliament. He thus saved England from the danger of revolution, then no vague or imaginary peril, for it broke a few months later upon

Europe. But he did more. He laid deep and strong the foundations of a commercial system which has outgrown the ideas and prospects of 1846 as much as they had surpassed the dreams of the Tudors. The greater part of the vexatious tariff which provoked the pungent satire of Sydney Smith had been swept away, and indirect taxation was limited to a few articles which contributed a large revenue without unnecessary disturbance of business.

The great Minister left the Treasury at a time of profound peace. He had little taste for military glory. His foreign policy, though firm and resolute, was essentially pacific. While cultivating friendly relations with the European Powers, he had the sagacity to foresee the future importance of the United States, and he attached especial value to their goodwill. In this respect also he was singularly fortunate, as he told Lord Hardinge in the next sentences to those already quoted. "Two hours after this intelligence was brought," he goes on, "we were ejected from power; and by another coincidence as marvellous, on the day in which I had to announce in the House of Commons the dissolution of the Government, the news arrived that we had settled the Oregon question, and that our proposals had been accepted by the United States without the alteration of a word." This disputed boundary, which highly concerned the Hudson's Bay Company and Canada, had brought the two countries to the verge of war, and its settlement is known to have been furthered by the free admission of American maize.

When Peel retired to Drayton Manor in the beautiful summer of 1846, he was not merely the first man in England but the foremost statesman in Europe. If, said Mr. Charles Villiers at the close of his long life, there had been between 1846 and 1850 a meeting of the people of England, Peel

would have been put in the chair. He was held in great esteem throughout the Continent. Among his regular correspondents was that sagacious monarch, the first king of the Belgians, and no English writer has more correctly estimated the English Minister's career than M. Guizot, the most distinguished Frenchman of his age. Peel was overthrown by a half sinister, half accidental combination of Whigs, Radicals, and Protectionists, who voted together against his stringent Coercion Bill for Ireland. Of these the Radicals only were sincere. The Protectionists cared no more for Ireland than they cared for Nova Zembla, and the Whigs were quite as ready as the Tories to propose special legislation against Irish crime. By the Protectionists Peel was hated and abused with a virulence which is painful to contemplate even at this distance of time. A single instance will suffice. It shall not be taken from the speech of a professional politician, nor from the language of buffoons like Lord Alvanley, who said that "Peel ought not to die a natural death," but from the familiar correspondence of a scholar and a man of letters, the son-in-law and biographer of Sir Walter Scott. In replying to an Address from Elbing, a seaport of Russia, Sir Robert had given a lucid exposition of what appeared to him the fundamental principles of Free Trade. Writing to John Wilson Croker, a fitting recipient of such a communication, Mr. Lockhart, at that time editor of the *Quarterly Review*, expresses himself as follows: "I seriously believe that he [Peel] was for his last year of power *not* in full possession of his faculties. [The italics are Lockhart's.] When he cut his foot, Brodie found it bleeding buckets full, yet he *instantly* cupped him on the temples, for he at once inferred that the accident had resulted from great disorder of the whole system, nerves included. This I know

to be the case; and my own doctor (Ferguson), who occasionally visits Lady Peel and the girls, has at this moment a strong impression that Sir Robert is in a dangerous state. The Elbing letter *sent furieusement l'apoplexie.*" The resemblance to the Archbishop of Grenada's sermon is in Lockhart's letter, and not in Peel's.

Taken at its worst, what was Peel's offence? That he had betrayed the cause of monopoly, and sacrificed a party to the nation. A personal motive could not even be suggested. Lockhart himself admits that Peel's retirement was genuine, and that he had no thought of return. When he resigned, he asked of Queen Victoria as a personal favour that she would never again call him to her counsels. Death in harness had no terrors for him. What he could not forget was that Lord Castlereagh died a maniac, and Lord Liverpool an idiot. The contemplation of such a fate did appal him, and Macaulay told him what, strange as it may appear now, was then true, that no man had led the House of Commons successfully after he was sixty. He possessed an ample fortune; he had collected a gallery of fine pictures; he was fond of country life; and he was particularly happy in his domestic circumstances. He was free from all temptation to consult anything except the good of the people. Although he chose to remain member for Tamworth, he was earnestly pressed to become member for the city of London, and he might have represented almost any large town in England. Yet, surrounded as he was by a brilliant band of pupils and disciples, he had, in the ordinary sense of the term, no party. There was scarcely a Peelite who was not a Privy Councillor, and most of them had been Secretaries of State. The closest, if not the staunchest of them all, was a converted Whig, Sir James Graham.

A false point has been made in defence of Peel, who needs none. It is said that he would not himself have carried Free Trade if the Whigs had been able to do so, and that he resigned to give them the opportunity. That is historically untrue. If his whole Cabinet had agreed with him, he would not have resigned in December 1845. It was Lord Stanley's resignation which forced his hand, and drove him to a course he would not otherwise have taken. Lord Stanley was accompanied by the Duke of Buccleugh, who was afterwards induced to return. The Duke of Wellington, though he would not, as he put it, desert his Sovereign, was a thorough Protectionist at heart. Until Mr. Gladstone succeeded Lord Stanley, Peel had no hearty supporters in the Cabinet except Sidney Herbert, Sir James Graham, and Lord Aberdeen. That he finally overcame all obstacles, and carried Free Trade through a Protectionist Parliament, was another example of the same magnificent courage which did not shrink when the spirit of others failed. It is more than doubtful whether the Whigs could have passed the Bill through the House of Lords. Peel, assisted by the Duke, was the one man who could do it, and this from the first he probably knew.

The effects of Free Trade were multiplied and enhanced by improvements in the means of locomotion. Modern England may be said to date from the substitution of the railway for the stage-coach. From the days of Chedorlaomer to the days of Stephenson there was very little advance in the speed of travelling. One simple piece of statistics, taken from Sir Stafford Northcote's well-known handbook, the most readable of all financial essays,[1] will show at a glance the enormous progress

[1] *Twenty Years of Financial Policy*, 1842–1861. Saunders, Otley, and Co. 1862. Perhaps not quite so well known as it deserves to be.

in the means of communication during 1844, 1845, and 1846. Up to 1844 the annual expenditure on railways had not exceeded five millions sterling. In the next three years it was a hundred and eighty-five millions. The "railway mania," as it was called, led to consequences, some of them disastrous, which must hereafter be described. The permanent effect of the iron horse upon the comfort and habits of society has been far greater than any legislation. Combined with the electric telegraph, a later, but not a much later, discovery, it called a new world into existence, or at all events revolutionised the old. Watt and Wheatstone annihilated distance, and almost destroyed time.

The disappearance of duelling, in some degree under the influence of Prince Albert, was also a mark of the transition from the old world to the new. By the law of England, duelling was always a crime, and to kill a man in a duel, however fairly fought, was always murder, even though the challenger were the victim. But public opinion was stronger than the law, and juries would not convict for an act of which they did not altogether disapprove. Duelling was virtually confined to the most conspicuous class of society, and was regarded as a distinctive mark of a gentleman. It was especially prevalent among public men. The Duke of Wellington fought a duel with Lord Winchilsea while he was Prime Minister, and received a characteristic remonstrance from Jeremy Bentham, beginning "Misguided man." Peel and Disraeli, who had not much else in common, both challenged O'Connell. But O'Connell was a devout Catholic, and after killing D'Esterre, a member of the old exclusive Dublin Corporation, he never could be persuaded to fight again. Lord Althorp was all but committed to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms, because he would not promise to

abstain from challenging Sheil. For the House of Commons, and especially the Speaker, always made at least a show of preventing armed conflicts between members. The first member of Parliament to raise as a question of privilege what would have formerly been considered ground for a hostile meeting was Joseph Hume, and he was warmly thanked for his moral courage by a political opponent, the best practical Christian then in public life, Lord Ashley.

So early as 1834, however, Mr. Pease, the first of that name who sat in the House of Commons, being asked by an Irishman named O'Dwyer for "an explanation, his card, and address," replied that "he gave no explanations except on his legs in the House of Commons, had no card, and no address."[1] By the time at which this History opens, duelling in England had practically ceased.

The least satisfactory feature of English life in 1846 was the condition of the labouring classes. Politically they were dumb, for they had no Parliamentary votes. Socially they were depressed, though their lot had been considerably improved by an increased demand for labour, and by the removal of taxes in Peel's great Budget of 1842. That was the year in which the misery of the English proletariat reached its lowest depth. In 1842 "one person in every eleven was a pauper, and one person in every five hundred was committed for trial."[2] Then the tide began to turn. The opposition to machinery had not been altogether unreasonable. Its first introduction, with the employment of steam in factories, had dislocated the market, had upset the manufacturing system, had thrown men out of work. Time, a quite considerable time, was required for the full effect

[1] "Greville Memoirs," 17th Feb. 1834.
[2] Walpole's *History of England*, v. 503.

of machinery to be seen in cheapening goods, and by cheapness stimulating the demand which it supplied. Then came the multiplication of railways, providing wages for thousands of navvies (inland navigators), and the blessing of cheap bread. At the same time emigration began to relieve the pressure upon subsistence, and, happily for England, the Irish famine partially forestalled the operation of the Act which established Free Trade. The welfare of the working classes was not promoted either by the low duties on spirits, or by the high duties on tea. A pound of tea paid in 1846 more than two shillings to the revenue, and a gallon of whisky paid less than three. Those who could not afford tea could afford gin, and the result was a deplorable amount of drunkenness among men who could easily have been tempted into moderation by a wiser tariff. The window-tax, the worst remaining heritage of the French war, darkened the homes of the poor, and the discovery of petroleum had not yet supplied them with the blessing, accompanied, it is true, with the danger, of cheap light. Elementary education, the light of the mind, was scandalously deficient. The amount voted for it by the House of Commons was insignificant. Many of the parochial clergy took a zealous interest in the parish schools, though they were under no obligation to provide secular teaching. The National Society, and the British and Foreign Schools Society worked to the utmost limit of their funds in setting up normal or model schools. But the business was far too large, difficult, and important for any authority lower than the State itself to undertake with any hope of success. To a really national system of education there were still apparently insurmountable obstacles. On the one hand were Tories who held as a principle that the instruction of the young at

elementary schools should be, as it was at public schools and universities, entirely in the hands of the Established Church. On the other hand were Radicals and Nonconformists who held in those days that education should be left to private enterprise, and that, if the State interfered, it would be to make proselytes for the Church. With cheap gin and bad education went low wages, especially in the hitherto protected interest of agriculture. At this time, however, two causes combined to reduce the pressure of population upon subsistence which placed the labourer at the mercy of his employer. The Irish famine, which began with the failure of the potato crop in the autumn of 1845, gradually lessened the number of Irish labourers who annually flocked to England for the wheat harvest. The stream of emigration to Canada and the United States, which assumed serious magnitude in 1846, and continued to increase for several years, enabled many families who would have come upon the rates at home to make a comfortable livelihood in the new world. There also they were safe from the risk, not merely of overcrowding, but of the bad drainage, or no drainage, which disgraced alike the towns and villages of Early Victorian England. Before the Health of Towns Act (1848), there was practically no sanitary legislation at all, and the dead were freely buried in the middle of the largest cities. The ravages of typhus and cholera were directly due to this scandalous and fatal neglect. But fortunately with the collapse of Chartism, soon to be recorded, there coincided the growth and progress of those Trade Unions which, despite many blunders and some crimes, have done more for the working classes of this country than all the Parliaments that ever assembled at Westminster. The early unions which alone existed in 1846

were cautious and even timid in their action. The law of conspiracy made by judges, and therefore uncertain in its operation, inspired them with a vague but reasonable dread, and they carefully discouraged strikes. The Miners' Association of Great Britain had been founded in 1841. The Potters' Union and the Cotton-Spinners' Association date from 1843; the National Typographical Society and the United Flint Gunmakers' Society from 1844.[1] When the National Association of United Trades was formed, the stone-masons, the printers, and the cotton-spinners refused to join it. When the builders of Manchester struck work in 1846, the National Association refused to support them, and the strike failed.[2] So small was the mutual confidence of the various trades at the outset of the movement destined to re-organise labour, and prepare it for competing on equal terms with the forces of capital. The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, started in 1844 by forty labourers, with a capital of twenty-eight pounds, was the first and not the least successful of the Co-operative Societies which have since played a double part as shops and savings banks in the industrial life of England. By the upper and middle classes of society in the middle of the nineteenth century working men were regarded with the sort of vague alarm inspired by what is at once vast and unknown. Their intense Conservatism was not suspected, and it was assumed by both parties that their votes would always be given on the Radical side.

"History," says Lord Acton in his Introductory Note to Mr. Gooch's *Annals of Politics and Culture*, "History embraces ideas as much as events, and derives its best virtue from regions

[1] *History of Trade Unionism* by Beatrice and Sidney Webb, p. 163.
[2] *Ibid.* 168–175.

beyond the sphere of State." Even in 1846 England was not entirely absorbed with the abolition of the corn laws. It was an age, as Mr. Disraeli perhaps alone among public men discerned, profoundly imaginative, poetical, and religious. Wordsworth, who deserves far better than those on whom Dr. Johnson conferred it the name of a metaphysical poet, was still Laureate. The fount was mute, the channel dry. But he had long outlived detraction; he was acknowledged to be without a rival, and in spite of the ecclesiastical sonnets he had taught by precept and example that spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. The width as well as the depth of his influence is illustrated by the enthusiastic and thoroughly appreciative devotion of a mind so different from his own as John Stuart Mill's. The great poet of the next age, Alfred Tennyson, was then thirty-seven. A pension from the Civil List, conferred by Sir Robert Peel at the instance of Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton, saved Tennyson from professional drudgery, or from the alternative of colonial exile. His early volume of poems had established his reputation with all competent and unprejudiced judges. But it was long before he became popular, and the stupidity of some criticisms, even in respectable periodicals, upon *In Memoriam*, is almost beyond belief. In 1846 was celebrated "the marriage of the poets," Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett. For a long time it was the fashion to say that the wife wrote better poetry than the husband. Posterity has reversed this judgment in favor of *Paracelsus*, of *Men and Women*, and of *Dramatis Personæ*. But *Sonnets from the Portuguese* have the ring of true passion in them, the passion of the soul. Robert Browning never enjoyed, nor perhaps deserved, the same popularity as Tennyson. If poets

of the few must be separated from poets of the many, he is a poet of the few. A prosaic era could not have produced him. His mind was constantly fermenting with ideas. He did not stand aloof from the world, like Tennyson, but mixed in it freely, and with enjoyment. In politics he was an advanced Liberal, and the "Englishman in Italy" expresses his opinion of the corn laws. He was a man whose thoughts sometimes struggled unsuccessfully with language. But the thought is always there, and is almost always worth the trouble of finding out.

Charles Dickens, the greatest of popular humourists, was in 1846 at the height of his fame. In natural genius no novelist has surpassed, and few indeed have equalled him. He owed little or nothing to education, except that form of education which consists in acquiring early a practical knowledge of the world. The fun of *Pickwick* is quite original. There was nothing like it before, and subsequent imitations of it have always failed. In the year of Free Trade Dickens became the first editor of the *Daily News*. But he soon had enough of ephemeral journalism, and went back to his proper business of writing books. He was a sentimental Radical, and would probably, if he had studied economic science, have become a Socialist. But he never studied anything, except mankind, and his bold attacks upon established abuses, such as imprisonment for debt, were the result of humanity enlightened by common sense. Although he loved to storm the strongholds of Philistinism, he was something of a Philistine himself. That may perhaps be the reason why his sentiment is so much less effective than his humour.

By the year 1846 the power of philosophical Radicalism was on the wane. The influence of

Bentham, the largest, save Rousseau's, ever exercised upon practical politics by a man of study, had spent itself in the reform of the criminal law and the removal of the burdens on trade. But a new force was beginning to work on the Benthamite side. John Stuart Mill cannot exactly be called an original thinker. Most of his ideas were derived from Bentham, from Ricardo, and from his own father. But he gave them freshness, popularity, and persuasive power. The Utilitarian school, to which he belonged, seemed dry, hard, and unsympathetic until the younger Mill kindled it with the fire of his eloquence and enthusiasm. No man of his generation had a higher spirit, purer aims, or a wider sympathy with the various aspirations of mankind. His *System of Logic*, by which he was then chiefly known, is the least characteristic of his works, and his *Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy*, the germ of his famous treatise on that science, were known only to students. His official position at the India House withdrew him till 1858 from the ordinary course of public life, which he ultimately adopted with reluctance. But as editor of the *Westminster Review*, the recognised organ of the Radical philosophers, who were represented in Parliament by Sir William Molesworth, he kept the lamp burning in the Benthamite shrine. The historian of the party was Harriet Martineau, whose narrative of the *Thirty Years' Peace*, destined to last for thirty-eight, is written almost exclusively from the Radical point of view. With the possible exception of Mrs. Somerville, Miss Martineau was the ablest woman of her time, and her grasp of economic science was as comprehensive as John Mill's. To the same school of thought and politics belonged George Grote, the illustrious historian of ancient Greece. Mr. Grote's Parliamentary career,

which was not undistinguished, had closed in 1841, and he then devoted himself strenuously to the task of his life. No other scholar has been so successful in the illustration of classical times by the light of modern development and analogy. He was an Aristotelian, as well as a Utilitarian. When he came to deal with Plato, and entered the spiritual region, he moved helplessly about in worlds not realised. Like all historians worth their salt, Mr. Grote has been accused of partisanship. He took the side of Athens and democracy, as Mitford had taken the side of Sparta and aristocracy. But Thirlwall, whose judicial fairness has never been impugned, declared that Mitford's honesty could only be saved at the expense of his intellect, and he himself does not substantially differ from the conclusions of Grote. Grote's *History*, of which the first two volumes appeared in 1846, marks an epoch of intellectual progress, because it exhibits clearly and on a large scale the essential unity of ancient and modern life.

No estimate of this period could be complete which ignored Thomas Carlyle. Standing as far apart as Mill himself from orthodox Christianity, Carlyle was a determined enemy of materialism. He first appeared in English literature as the student and interpreter of Goethe. But the disciple was very unlike the master. "Of all the educated men I have ever known," said Sir Henry Taylor, "Carlyle has the least capacity for reasoning." He had certainly none of Goethe's rational philosophy, none of his Olympian calm. Although his taste in poetry was severely circumscribed, and he could see nothing in Keats, he had himself the soul of a poet and a humorist. He was an idealist, a hero-worshipper, a believer in force, a railer at forms. The principal institutions of modern England, especially those centred at

Downing Street and Westminster, were profoundly obnoxious to him. Parliamentary debates were babble. Government by Cabinet was red tape. He was always advertising for a strong man. He would have liked to make the Duke of Wellington, who probably never heard of him, Dictator — an office which the Duke would certainly have declined with even more than his accustomed emphasis. Carlyle had all the inconsistencies of genius. The man he professed most thoroughly to despise was a Parliamentary statesman, a Sir Jabez Windbag, as he called him; and if ever there was a type of the Parliamentary statesman, it was Sir Robert Peel. But on the 19th of June 1846 Carlyle sent Sir Robert a copy of *Cromwell's Life and Letters*, with a most admiring letter from himself. Coming from the author of *Sartor Resartus*, and *Latter Day Pamphlets*, these words are remarkable indeed. "By and by, as I believe, all England will say what already many a one begins to feel, that whatever were the spoken unveracities in Parliament — and they are many on all hands, lamentable to gods and men — here has a great veracity been *done* in Parliament, considerably our greatest for many years past, a strenuous, courageous, and manful thing, to which all of us that so see it are bound to give our loyal recognition, and such furtherance as we can." Why Carlyle, who objected so vehemently to the abolition of slavery, should have rejoiced so keenly in the establishment of Free Trade is not obvious. Political economy he abhorred, and called it the dismal science, though without it Protection would have been immortal. Cobden and Bright he would have treated much as Dr. Johnson would have treated Rousseau and Voltaire. It was not Peel the economist, but Peel the strong man that he welcomed. The party of physical force derived

much encouragement from the writings of Carlyle. Their great enemy was the great Minister. They were vanquished by cheap bread.

If there was one thing which Carlyle disdained more than practical politics (apart from literary copyright), it was ecclesiastical controversy. The Oxford Movement he regarded as a fuss about clothes, and he pronounced Dr. Newman not to have "the intellect of a rabbit." That too many books have been written about the Oxford Movement it would be the last extremity of paradox to deny. But the contempt expressed for it by superior persons has not been justified by events, and was not shared by Mr. Disraeli, who saw more of the game than most lookers-on, and considered the secession of Newman in 1845 as the greatest blow received by the Church of England in his time. With it ended the first phase of the movement. Newman and Ward, "Ideal" Ward, had now gone. Pusey, Keble, Manning, and Hope-Scott remained. Two of the Peelites, Gladstone and Sidney Herbert, were closely associated with them. But as a rule it may be said, in spite of eminent exceptions, that Tractarianism had little effect upon the laity. It was clerical in its origin, clerical in its nature, and clerical in its results. It found the clergy for the most part evangelical. It left them for the most part sacerdotalist. It found them mere English gentlemen. It left them theologians and priests. Human nature proved too strong for the principle of celibacy. But the clergy, for good or for evil, perhaps for both, became less like laymen. They adopted a more distinctive dress. They ceased, as a rule, to hunt and shoot, to dance and play cards. They had always been alive to the sin of schism. They now became sensitive to the vice of heresy. Protestantism was discovered not to be a religion. The Church of

England was not Protestant, it was Anglo-Catholic. The feasts of the Church were more carefully celebrated, the communion-table became an altar, and in process of time, though not till long after 1846, the black gown disappeared from the pulpit. Simultaneously with these ceremonial changes the Oxford Movement produced a most laudable increase of activity among parochial clergymen. The Church of England was no longer a comfortable provision for the second son of the squire. The Bishops felt the pressure of a vigilant criticism, and did their best to raise the standard of the cloth. The clergy had not begun in 1846 to feel the pinch of poverty. A man who took holy orders was still reasonably sure of a comfortable maintenance, and holy orders were still taken as a matter of course by most fellows of colleges, and masters at public schools. These nominal clergymen sometimes became Canons, Deans, and even Bishops. They still edited the classics from the dignified leisure of rural parsonages. But they were the exception. Upon the general body of the working clergy the Oxford Movement acted as a powerful stimulant to professional zeal.

There has always been in every Church a broad, or latitudinarian school. In 1846 the chief English representative of this school was Connop Thirlwall, Bishop of St. David's, whose episcopal charges may to this day be read as serious and permanent contributions to the history of human thought. Of Bishop Thirlwall it might be said, with more truth than of the poet Gray, that he never spoke out. He was a man eminently decorous, disliking needless controversy, though a consummately dexterous controversialist. A more commanding intellect had not been enlisted in the service of the English Church since the death of Bishop Butler. Thirlwall had all Bishop Butler's contempt for

shallow infidelity, and was fearful of doing anything to encourage it. But he was throughout his life a promoter of Liberalism, and of the free thought without which Liberalism cannot flourish. In his Cambridge days, as a tutor of Trinity, he had sacrificed his official position by his zealous support of the Dissenters' claim that they might be admitted within the University. A retort which he made on that occasion deserves to be celebrated, not merely for its exquisite irony, but because it contains the essence of Liberalism in religious matters. One of his Conservative colleagues had objected that the presence of Nonconformists would put an end to the enforcement of church-going, and that the alternative was compulsory religion or no religion at all. "I confess," said Thirlwall, "that the distinction is too subtle for my mental grasp." Thirlwall's *History of Greece* has been unjustly obscured by Grote's. Their merits are different, but one is quite as good as the other. In point of style Thirlwall's is by far the better of the two. He was an excellent writer: lucid, dignified, impressive. John Mill, who belonged in early life to the same debating society as Thirlwall, pronounced him to be the best speaker he had ever heard, and the few speeches he made in the House of Lords were all of the very highest order. He was a modern linguist as well as a classical scholar, and within a year of his appointment to the See of St. David's he had mastered the Welsh tongue. Buried as he was in a remote diocese, which he never neglected, he enjoyed the respect and esteem of educated Europe for the profundity of his learning and the grasp of his mind. He avowed himself a Broad Churchman, and was not ashamed of the title. The opposite of broad, he observed, was neither high nor low, but narrow. The first Broad Churchman, he

added, was St. Jerome, and he argued that the party had never lost its identity since the fifth century of the Christian era. In 1846 there was no Convocation, or at least it was not allowed to sit. But Thirlwall's charges were read by laymen who never thought of reading anybody else's, and he connected the Church with the cultivated few. Research into the origin of the Gospels was at this time stimulated by the writings of Baur, the first theologian then living in Germany, and founder of the modern critical school. Thirlwall was the one English bishop, perhaps the one English clergyman, unless Dr. Martineau is to be so called, familiar with these speculations. He maintained a natural reserve. But he was in full sympathy with that liberal handling of religious questions which was anathema to the leaders of the Oxford Movement.

Lord Acton's predecessor in the Chair of Modern History at Cambridge, Sir John Seeley, says, in his *Expansion of England*, that the historian is only concerned with man as a citizen, as belonging to a State. This doctrine is the exact opposite of Lord Acton's, and every historian must choose between them. I pronounce for Lord Acton. Thucydides, says Seeley, tells us a great deal about Cleon, and nothing at all about Socrates, though he must have known that Socrates was an infinitely greater man than Cleon. The answer is that Thucydides wrote a history not of Athens, but of the Peloponnesian War, in which he was himself engaged. He discarded everything not relevant to his subject, and his digressions are scarcely wider than Kinglake's. The illustration is therefore immaterial, and would be so even if it were possible for a sane historian to attempt a rivalry with Thucydides. What Seeley meant was that history should be purely

political, and in this I cannot agree with him. Indeed, he himself, with doubtful consistency, complains that historians of the eighteenth century have followed too closely the proceedings of Parliament. In the eighteenth century Parliament reflected much less adequately than it does now, or than it did fifty years ago, the life and thought of the nation. But even now there are many vital elements of national progress, and of national decadence, which do not find their way into Parliamentary debates, and which cannot be called political. Modern England was not erected by Act of Parliament. Free Trade was essential to her commercial supremacy, and the establishment of Free Trade was a piece of practical politics. But Free Trade would have been comparatively useless without steam, and no Parliament ever yet made a scientific discovery. Telegraphy, especially submarine telegraphy, owes more to a single Scotsman, William Thomson, Lord Kelvin, than to all the Parliaments of the world. A strictly political history would, I presume, take no notice of Tennyson until he voted for county franchise in the House of Lords, and would ignore Browning altogether. Lord Ellenborough[1] laid down a true principle when he said with characteristic irony that "chronological order is the best." There is sting, as well as point, in Sterne's remark that he will now bring up the affairs of the kitchen, as Rapin brings up the affairs of the Church. The essence of history is narrative, not disquisition, and narrative must be continuous. I propose to divide this book into periods, not into subjects. Sequences, as David Hume says, we know. Causes we can only conjecture. The silent working of the human mind, which in the long run determines the policy of nations, and their fate, can only be

[1] The Chief Justice.

traced in its outward consequences. But these are infinitely various. The conservation of energy may be applied to the moral as well as to the material sphere. Literature, science, politics, art, have as their one common source the mind of man, and it is paradoxical to maintain that they are not related with each other. The poet, like the statesman, is the creature of his age, as well as the creator of his work. There is a reason, though we may not know it, for the date of a theory, as there is for the date of a Bill. The best clue a historian can furnish, because the best he can follow, is the simple order of events. I do not say that he should let them speak for themselves. He must be ill prepared for the performance of his task if his studies have not suggested to him some inferences from the past which may be used as guides for the future. If he be the mere advocate of a party, he will get no hearing from the other side. But he must have his opinions, like other people, and it is not, I think, his duty, even if it be in his power, to conceal them. Perfect impartiality implies omniscience, and is not human but divine. To extenuate nothing, to set down nought in malice, to consider always the actions of men from their own point of view before passing judgment upon them, and not to expect from fallible mortals a fore-knowledge of things, is the elementary duty of the historian. Above all, he must not lose himself in the satisfied contemplation of material progress. For the things which are seen are temporal, the things which are not seen are eternal.

CHAPTER I

THE LAST WHIG GOVERNMENT

1846.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL succeeded Sir Robert Peel as Prime Minister on the 29th of June 1846. Peel could fairly and constitutionally have dissolved Parliament instead of resigning office. He was strongly urged to do so by Mr. Cobden, who predicted that he would secure a triumphant majority, and that his bitterest opponents would lose their seats. It is probable that Cobden was correct in his anticipations. But the Minister declined to follow the friendly advice of his former antagonist for various reasons, of which the most important was that he would not make the subject of Coercion for Ireland the matter of an appeal to the country. The correspondence between the two men was kept strictly secret at the time, and was first published in Mr. Morley's *Life of Cobden*.[1] It is extremely interesting, for both letters are highly characteristic. Most striking is the contrast between the drily formal mode of address adopted on either side, and the sentiments of mutual regard and esteem which the language of the writers displays. This exchange of opinion occurred a week before the defeat of the Government on the Irish Bill, which Peel and Cobden alike assumed to be inevitable. It therefore, of course, preceded Peel's famous eulogy of Cobden in the House of Commons. Immediately after the

Peel's resignation.

[1] Vol. i. pp. 390–401.

victory of his cause Cobden left England for a tour on the Continent, and did not again appear in the House till after the General Election of 1847. 1846.

The new Prime Minister was fifty-four years of age. He was the only possible successor to Sir Robert. Lord Grey, the Lord Grey of the Reform Bill, was dead, and Lord Spencer, better known as Lord Althorp, had died the same year as Lord Grey. Lord Melbourne was alive, and felt some disappointment at not being offered a place in the new Cabinet. But even if he had not been strongly opposed to Free Trade, his health was declining, and he was quite unfit for work of any sort. Lord John Russell had failed to form a Government in December 1845, when the new Lord Grey refused to join a Cabinet in which Lord Palmerston was Foreign Secretary, and Lord Palmerston refused to join a Cabinet in which he was anything else.[1] A difficulty which proved insurmountable in 1845 might well have been fatal in 1846. Nor was it the only one. The House of Commons, elected in 1841, and still in existence, contained a Tory majority of ninety. The Tories were now broken up, but the Radicals were an uncertain element, and there was no majority for the Whigs. The Irish were not more amenable to discipline. O'Connell, who had given such powerful support to Free Trade, was merely the shadow of a great name. His strength was broken, and he was preparing himself, with the devotion of a good Catholic, for another world. The Whigs were no longer the favourites at Court they once had been. Queen Victoria had passed from the influence of Lord Melbourne to the influence of Prince Albert, and Prince Albert was a Peelite. But indeed it is a mistake, and an Lord John Russell.

[1] Lord Grey's conduct and motives are the principal subject of an interesting article on the second instalment of the "Greville Memoirs" in the *English Historical Review* for January 1886.

1846. injurious mistake, to suppose that Lord Melbourne made the Queen a Whig. He made her a constitutional sovereign. As a statesman, with many faults, he possessed the rare and splendid virtue, for which there ought to be a better name, of absolute disinterestedness. In the political education of a monarch he never thought of his party, nor of himself. He thought only of England, and by no man was this fact more thoroughly appreciated than by Sir Robert Peel. Lord John Russell was not designed by nature, or disposed by inclination to act the part of a courtier. He never suffered his Sovereign to forget that she belonged to the House of Hanover, and represented the glorious revolution of 1688. The Queen, with some inconsistency, was devoted to the House of Stuart, and the Prince's views of monarchical government did not materially differ from those of George the Third. The combination was scarcely auspicious. Nevertheless Lord John formed his Administration with an ease and rapidity that, despite his pluck and self-confidence, he cannot have expected. That much of the credit for this result was his own is unquestionable. He had held high office with distinction, and performed great tasks with success. He had borne the principal part in carrying the Reform Bill through the House of Commons. As Leader of the House from 1835 to 1841 he had belied the judgment of William the Fourth, and commanded general esteem. As Leader of the Opposition he had shown that cool and undaunted courage which never at any time deserted him. In 1846, and for some years afterwards, he was at his best. Genial and conciliatory he never was, to either friend or foe. He had no tact, and he was not a man of the world. But these deficiencies are comparative trifles, and they were the worst faults that had yet been discovered

in him. His intense zeal for social and political progress inspired him with an eloquence not the less effective because he reserved it for great occasions. But brilliant as Lord John's qualifications were, he was at this time under the shield of one greater than himself. Peel was determined to keep the Whigs in office, because only by so doing could he keep the Protectionists out, and to keep Peel out, the Protectionists were willing to keep the Whigs in. For that end they would have voted for Bright and Cobden, so intense was their hatred of their former chief. The Peel papers, edited by Mr. Charles Parker, have made it plain that Peel's resolve never to take office again was not absolutely final. If he had considered Free Trade to be in danger, he would have overcome his repugnance, and put on harness once more. The contingency never arose, because Peel was the first man in the country, as in Parliament, and under his protection the Whigs were safe.

1846.

Peel's position.

It was not Lord John Russell's original design to form a purely Whig Administration. He offered places to Lord Lincoln, afterwards Duke of Newcastle, to Mr. Sidney Herbert, and to Lord Dalhousie, for whom a far higher destiny was reserved. But these three Peelites all declined to separate themselves in any way from their Leader, and Lord John then turned to the Whigs. To Mr. Cobden, who had refused with just contempt a subordinate place in 1845, he made no offer, explaining in an ambiguous letter that "circumstances," one of which was Cobden's projected absence from England, made it impossible. The other circumstance is understood to have been Cobden's acceptance of a pecuniary testimonial from his admirers, which he expended in the purchase of a small estate in Sussex, once the property of his forbears. Why a reward so honourably

Overtures to the Peelites.

Cobden's exclusion.

1846. bestowed, and so laboriously earned, should disqualify a statesman from the public service of his country is a question which the illustrious owner of Stratfieldsaye would have found some difficulty in answering.

The last exclusively Whig Government that has held office in England consisted of seventeen members. Next to the Prime Minister, if indeed that qualification be required, was the Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston. This "gay, eupeptic son of Belial" was now in his sixty-second year. No English statesman, except Walpole and Pitt, has passed so large a proportion of his public life in office. The ratio was forty-nine years of office to fifty-nine of public life. While the Tories were in power, he was a Tory. For more than twenty years, from 1807 to 1828, he was Secretary at War, or, as we should now say, Financial Secretary to the War Office. During that long period he seldom spoke, and Canning, who spoke for pleasure, complained that "he could not bring that three-decker Palmerston into action." Canning and the Duke of Wellington had not much in common. But they agreed in having Lord Palmerston for a colleague. Whether or not Lord Palmerston perceived that the Duke's Government would be a short one, he resigned in 1828 with Grant and Huskisson, thus making it possible for him to enter the Government of Lord Grey in 1830. He then first went to the Foreign Office. But Lord Grey was a real Prime Minister, and very much his own Foreign Secretary. Under the indifferent and easy-going Melbourne Palmerstonian principles had full swing, and were carried out by their author with complete freedom from restraint. They may be briefly described as general interference in the affairs of Europe, with a due regard for the interests of England, a hearty sympathy with European

Lord Palmerston.

Liberalism, a manly hatred of oppression, and a supreme contempt for the susceptibilities of foreign Governments. Lord Palmerston was a man of fashion, and a man of pleasure. His house was a social centre of much importance. But he was also pre-eminently a man of affairs, who never neglected his business, and was always master of his subject. When he returned to office under Lord John, no man in Europe could be compared with him for knowledge of foreign policy, except Metternich and Guizot. He took difficulties as a bold rider takes a stiff fence, relying on his horse and his luck. Hitherto his luck had been very good, and his horse was a splendid animal. In 1846 England was undoubtedly the first Power of the world, as France was the second. There was no Germany, and the United States were mewing, as Milton says, their mighty youth. The Emperor of Austria was an idiot, and the King of Prussia a dreamer. The Emperor of Russia was indeed a formidable personage. But Russia was even less civilised then than she is now, and even further aloof from the rest of mankind. 1846.

Lord Palmerston could not bear the idea of "non-intervention" as a policy. He held that everything which happened in Europe had a legitimate interest for England, and that the least she could do was to favour the parties concerned with the benefit of her public advice. Whether Lord Palmerston's foreign policy was sound or not he pursued it with rare acuteness, with singular perseverance, and, so far as individuals were concerned, with infinite tact and good humour. But it was very difficult for any Prime Minister to restrain him, and his return to his old post was excessively irritating to the principal diplomatists of Europe. Palmerston, however, thoroughly understood his countrymen, and especially the middle class, which then con-

trolled the House of Commons. He was never an orator, nor, except on his own special topics, did he shine in debate. But the House and the country liked his breezy, sportsman-like way of treating serious subjects, and they were rather proud of the hatred felt for him by the Chanceries of the Continent. He was a dangerous Minister, but not a weak one, and upon the whole he was the strongest man in the Cabinet.

The Secretary of State for War and the Colonies was Lord Grey, the third Earl, who had succeeded to his father's title in the previous year. His objections to Palmerston had been overcome, and he had persuaded himself that there was some change in the situation, or in Palmerston, or in both. The truth was that he had changed his own mind. He desired office, not from any unworthy motive, but because he was conscious of his capacity to serve the public in an administrative department. During the later portion of his very long life Lord Grey was best known as an active and hostile critic of both Liberal and Conservative Governments. But in 1846 his opinions were regarded by moderate Whigs like Mr. Evelyn Denison, afterwards Speaker, as perilously extreme, and he would scarcely have been a Minister if he had not been a Grey. He was a scientific economist, and a free trader by conviction. Indeed, politics were to him an exact science, so that he was never in doubt. His ability and sincerity were accompanied by an arrogant temper and a domineering spirit. But comparatively little interest was taken in his appointment. For the feeling of most people about the Colonies at that time was a hope that, now Canada had been pacified, we should hear no more about them. There were two Greys in the Cabinet, belonging to different branches of the same family. But they were very

unlike each other. Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, was the model of a courteous gentleman, and a moderate statesman. He was without brilliant or conspicuous talents. But perhaps no Minister of his time was so universally respected by all parties in the House of Commons. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was Mr. Charles Wood, who became Sir Charles a few months afterwards on the death of his father, and was subsequently created Viscount Halifax. Lord Halifax lived to extreme old age, and from the date of his double first at Oxford to the day of his death, no one ever doubted his great ability. But the strong point of the Whigs was not finance, and Sir Charles Wood was no exception to the rule. The best that could be said for his Budgets was that they were better than Mr. Spring Rice's, or Sir Francis Baring's. The Marquess of Lansdowne, the President of the Council, and Leader of the House of Lords, was the recognised head of Whig society and a trusted counsellor of Whigs in distress. Lord Lansdowne was not ambitious, and never would accept the highest office in the State. But he was regarded as indispensable to Whig Cabinets, and he possessed the happy gift of smoothing differences among his colleagues.

1846.
Sir George Grey.
Sir Charles Wood.
Lord Lansdowne.

It is no disadvantage for any Government, even in this constitutional country, to have a friend at Court. The friend at Court in this case was George Villiers, Earl of Clarendon, to whom both the Queen and Prince Albert were sincerely attached. Lord Clarendon became President of the Board of Trade, and as he had been a Commissioner of Customs for ten years, he might fairly be assumed to have some knowledge of business. If the singular arrangement proposed by Lord John Russell in 1845 had been carried out, he would have been Mr. Cobden's official chief. But he had been Minister at Madrid as well as Com-

Lord Clarendon.

1846. missioner of Customs, and his heart was in diplomacy, not in trade. He was a keen-witted, accomplished, cynical man of the world, having more knowledge of foreign affairs than any other member of the Cabinet except Lord Palmerston, with whose meddlesome tactics he was not in sympathy. Lord Clarendon, though he died in office under Mr. Gladstone, was an aristocrat in the proper sense of that term, which denotes not a class but a creed. He believed in the theory of Government by a small and specially qualified set of men. The Board of Trade did not suit him, and he was soon afterwards, as we shall see, removed to a very different post.

The members of the last Whig Cabinet have long since been removed by death. But there was one among them whose memory can never perish while English literature survives. Lord John's Macaulay. first Paymaster-General was Thomas Babington Macaulay, then in his forty-sixth year. Mr. Macaulay was already known as a brilliant orator, a popular poet, a still more popular essayist, and a talker whose vast stores of erudition were constantly displayed in only too plentiful abundance. The Penal Code for India, which he had to draw up when legal member of Council, was not yet in force, and no volume of his great *History* had hitherto appeared. He was, however, already engaged upon it, and it absorbed his attention to a degree which would have made any laborious office impossible for him. A man whose mind was in the seventeenth century could not deal to much purpose with the practical needs of the nineteenth. He made some excellent speeches from the Treasury Bench. But his mornings were spent in the British Museum, for the duties of the Paymaster-General were light. On the other hand, a modest salary of two thousand a year, long since abolished,

represented the enormous profits made by the Paymasters of George the Third. But even from the patronage of Chelsea Hospital Macaulay was soon to be released by circumstances over which he had no control. 1846.

The Duke of Wellington, though he could no longer sit in the Cabinet, retained, by the Queen's express desire, the position of Commander-in-Chief. No other soldier would, it was thought, be acceptable to the army. The Duke has been finely described as "the greatest man that was ever sincerely content to serve,"[1] and he cheerfully responded to Her Majesty's appeal. Yet it would perhaps have been better for the country and for his own reputation if he had retired into private life. He was seventy-seven. His bodily health was good, and it cannot be said that his mind ever actually decayed. But he became peevish, irritable, and fretful. He worried himself and others about trifles which a few years before he would have heartily despised. He was perfectly loyal to the Whig Government, as he would have been to any Government, and he was on excellent terms with Lord John. Indeed he much preferred him to Sir Robert, against whom he bore a lasting grudge for having forced him, as he considered, to vote against his principles in favour of Free Trade. The Duke in his last years was perpetually complaining that the national defences were inadequate, and he was right. He was never an alarmist, and always an economist, if only because he believed that extravagance would endanger the political supremacy of his order. But he had lost his official influence with his ancient vigour, and his warnings were unheeded. The Duke of Wellington.

The Duke, as Commander-in-Chief, could not well lead the Opposition in the House of Lords, The Opposition.

[1] Cory's *Guide to Modern English History*. Kegan Paul, 1880. vol. i. p. 10.

1846. Lord Stanley.

and that duty devolved upon Lord Stanley, afterwards Earl of Derby, three times Prime Minister of England. Lord Stanley had been called up to the House of Lords in his father's barony two years before, when he was Secretary of State for the Colonies in the Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel. It was a misfortune for the cause of Protection, to which he was at that time devoted, that he had left the House of Commons. For he was the prince of Parliamentary debaters, and a match in this respect even for Peel. He had brilliant gifts and great abilities, but not the wisdom and foresight which belong to the highest statesmanship. Nor was he even moderately well informed. He knew the classics, the *Turf Guide*, and very little else. Serious political conviction, except where the Church was concerned, he had none. He was a zealous churchman, and he confounded the Church with the establishment. That is the one consistent element in a career otherwise chaotic. He had been a Whig, and the most ardent of Parliamentary reformers. He was now a Tory, and chief of the revolt against Free Trade. He left Lord Grey rather than consent that the surplus revenues of the Irish Church should be appropriated to secular purposes. He left Sir Robert Peel rather than agree to the abolition of the Corn Laws. It seemed impossible for him to act long with any one. Yet if the Protectionists could have formed a Government he would have been their chief. Lord Stanley's private and personal character was stainless. But political principle was a thing he seemed incapable of understanding, and with the almost solitary exception of Lord Malmesbury, those who knew him best trusted him least. The most vivid description of him is Sir Henry Taylor's.[1] "He was

[1] *Autobiography*, vol. i. p. 131.

greatly admired by a large party in the country — perhaps by the country generally — throughout a long life, and it was customary to call him 'chivalrous.' I think he was not chivalrous. He was a very able and capable man; he had force, energy, and vivacity; and he was an effective speaker, always clear, seldom brilliant. He was not a man of genius; nor could it be said that he had a great intellect. He had the gifts of a party politician, such as eminent party politicians were in the generations immediately preceding his own, rather than *in* his own — subsisting throughout his life, so far as literature is concerned, mainly upon the scholarship and academical accomplishments with which he began it, and playing the game of politics with more of party than of public spirit, and with not much perhaps of personal friendliness." Taylor underrates Lord Stanley as an orator. But in other respects his estimate, though it may be coloured by personal dislike, is not far from the truth. 1846.

In the House of Commons there can hardly be said to have been any Opposition at all. Writing on the 4th of July 1846, Mr. Charles Greville, to whose journals every writer and every student of Victorian history owes an inestimable debt, says, "Such a transfer of power from one Minister to another the world never saw before — no rivalry, no mortification, no disappointment, nor triumph, nor coldness; all has been civility, cordiality, and the expression of feelings not merely amiable but cordial." The principal object of the late Prime Minister was to support his successor. The nominal leader of the Protectionists was Lord George Bentinck, son of the Duke of Portland, and member for King's Lynn. But for the accident that his Life was written by a man of genius, Lord George Bentinck would have

Lord George Bentinck.

1846. been long since forgotten. He was a man of very doubtful character, and his political capacity was slight. He had sat for nearly twenty years in Parliament, first as a Canningite, then as a moderate Whig, then as a Conservative, without making a speech of the slightest importance. Indeed so totally incapable of oratory did he conceive himself to be that he seriously attempted to get a lawyer into the House for the purpose of making the speeches which he could not make himself.[1] From this absurd design, however, he was ultimately dissuaded, and at last, after the Corn Law Bill had been read a second time, he began his campaign. It was inspired by a bitter hatred of the League and of Cobden, but still more of Peel. Lord George was soon found to be fluent enough, and ready to address the House at great length upon almost any subject. But his arguments were for the most part worthless, and his manipulation of statistics proved nothing except his own inability to deal with them. He was utterly uneducated, and knew nothing except his stud book. Of economic science he was as ignorant as a baby. That the House of Commons should have listened to him is amazing. But he proved his sincerity by selling his horses, and his zeal by never leaving the House. He represented the feelings of the landed interest, and he was cheered by many who must have known that he was talking nonsense because of his virulent attacks upon Sir Robert Peel. He did not, however, confine himself to Sir Robert, and the imputations upon Lord Lyndhurst with which he disgraced himself in the summer of 1846 seem to show a disordered mind. Lord Lyndhurst was not incapable of jobbery, nor averse from intrigue. But the legal

[1] Serjeant Byles, afterwards Mr. Justice Byles, author of *Byles on Bills*.

and ecclesiastical patronage of which Lord George Bentinck complained was as innocent as Lord George's connection with the turf had been the reverse. Such was the leader whom the country gentlemen of England preferred to Sir Robert Peel. They sat together for a time on the same side as the Government. 1846.

The first business of the new Cabinet was to readjust the duties on sugar, which were then voted annually, and to make them permanent. There was a prohibitive tax on foreign sugar, chiefly grown in Cuba and Brazil, which was the produce of forced labour. The supply of sugar was therefore practically restricted to the West Indian Colonies of Great Britain, and it fell far short of the demand. Lord John Russell proposed that the duties should be equalised, without regard to the question whether the imported sugar was grown by slaves or by free men. This was in strict agreement with the policy applied to corn, and it was also the policy of Lord Melbourne's Administration, upon which he had been defeated in 1841. But it encountered a double opposition from Protectionists on the one hand, and from Abolitionists on the other. Lord John's arguments were really unanswerable, and were certainly never answered. Cheap sugar is only less important than cheap bread, and sugar in England was then very dear. The dearness was due to scarcity, and the scarcity was caused by law. Here then was an evil which Parliament had brought about, and which Parliament could take away. Parliament therefore was bound to remove it. The horrors of slavery, upon which many speakers dilated, were nothing to the point. Slavery had been abolished in the British dominions, and the British Legislature could do no more. No impression whatever was made upon Cuban or Brazilian slavery by the antiquated tariff

The sugar duties.

1846. which raised the price of the article "so cheering to infancy, and so soothing to old age." The Abolitionists made no objection to slave-grown cotton, slave-grown tobacco, or slave-grown coffee. From all nations entitled by treaty to the most favourable terms we were bound to admit what was made by slaves, while even from Brazil and Cuba the British merchant could obtain sugar through the Continent at an enhanced rate. Lord George Bentinck took up and adopted the amendment moved by Lord Sandon to the Whig proposals of 1841, and supported by Sir Robert Peel. He asked the House to declare that "the proposed reduction of duty upon foreign slave-grown sugar was alike unjust and impolitic, as tending to check the advance of Production by British free labour, and to give a great additional stimulus to the slave trade." Lord George did not care about either slavery or the slave trade. He wanted no doubt to uphold Protection, but he wanted above all things to put Peel in a dilemma. He did not succeed. On the contrary, he gave Sir Robert an opportunity of stating his position, which was a perfectly constitutional and Parliamentary one. For the nonce the great free trader was faithless to Free Trade. He held that the question of slavery took the case out of the ordinary rule, and on principle therefore he was against the change. But he had also to consider the result of turning the Government out. He would not accept office himself, and he would not do anything to increase the risk of a Protectionist Administration.

Mr. Disraeli. Mr. Disraeli, in an extremely clever and paradoxical speech, of which it is hard to say how much he believed, declared that the Sugar Bill would be the destruction of our colonial system, and that we should have to reconstruct it. He then put forward the remarkable theory that the history of England

is a history of reaction. He proved this theory, or pretended to prove it, by a severely simple process. He contrasted the policy of the Commonwealth with the policy of the Restoration. This is absurd enough. But when Mr. Disraeli came five years afterwards to describe the debate in which he had himself borne a part, he added one of those striking aphorisms which may be found scattered up and down his published works. "The truth is," he wrote, "progress and reaction are but words to mystify the millions. They mean nothing; they are nothing; they are phrases and not facts. All is race." [1] The last three words represent the profoundest mind of this extraordinary man. He calls himself in the Life "a follower of Lord George Bentinck." In everything except social position he was as much superior to Lord George as one man can be to another. He was described in after years by the greatest of his rivals as the most remarkable personage in European politics during the nineteenth century. He had been at no university, and no public school. His father was an antiquary and a bookworm, who passed his life in a library, and whose collections of literary anecdotes still amuse the curious. Isaac Disraeli was nominally a Jew, and really a free thinker. He cared nothing for the Jewish or the Christian religion. By the advice of Samuel Rogers he had Benjamin christened, not as an essential requirement for the next world, but as a desirable qualification in this. Mr. Disraeli throughout his life professed the Christian faith. He believed, so far as he can be said to have had any religious belief, that religion was a secret of the Semitic race. His father introduced him to the best literary society, of which, so long as he cared for any society at all, he was honourably and sincerely fond. In the 1846.

[1] *Life of Lord George Bentinck*, p. 331.

1846. House of Commons he was then unpopular, and his maiden speech, though clever enough, had been a failure. But his brilliant talents, his singular audacity, and his boundless ambition, triumphed over all obstacles, of which his Hebrew origin was perhaps, odd as the fact may seem nowadays, the most serious. He applied to Peel for office in 1841, and Peel, who hated him, refused it. He took his revenge five years later in a series of most violent attacks upon the Minister of Free Trade, although he had himself satirised Protection in a story called *Popanilla*. By birth and training an Englishman, by descent a Portuguese Jew, he was sufficiently detached from British habits of mind to regard the affairs of the United Kingdom with an impartial scrutiny. He understood England, as Napoleon understood France, the more thoroughly for being half a foreigner, and he had an eye which naturally penetrated below the surface of things. He was interesting, he was original, and he was already a genuine force in Parliament.

The safety of the Government. The second reading of the Sugar Bill was carried by a majority of 130, which proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Ministry were safe till the next General Election, or, in other words, for twelve months. What Charles Greville had written on the 4th of July was strictly correct, and is an admirable summary of the situation. "So curious a change in so short a time was never seen. A few weeks ago hundreds of people fancied Peel would never go out; they could not tell why, but they insisted that the difficulty of forming another Government, and its weakness when formed, would be insurmountable. If Lord John came in, how was he to stay in? everybody asked, and the most sanguine Whigs did not pretend to answer and explain how, and generally professed no wish to turn out Peel.

Well, Lord John comes in, forms a very strong Government with unparalleled facility, receives every assistance and every assurance of support from the Ministers he had turned out, finds himself not only without an organised Opposition in Parliament, but without an enemy or a malcontent in any quarter. His advent to power is received, in the country at least, with acquiescence, if not with delight; he has no difficulties to encounter, no legacy of embarrassments to perplex him, and as far as all appearances go, his Government is, and for some time at least, promises to be, the strongest the country has ever seen." The Government was not so strong as it looked, and the weakness of its finance was deplorable. But Mr. Greville did not set up for a prophet. The value of his journals is that they faithfully record the impressions of the day. 1846.

The passage of the Sugar Bill through the Lords was easy and rapid. Lord Grey and Lord Lansdowne showed themselves better opponents of slavery, as well as better advocates of Free Trade, than their adversaries, when they argued that forced labour could not in the long run hold its own against good wages, skilled workmen, and improved machinery. One eloquent voice was raised in the House of Lords against the Bill. Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, faithful to his father's memory, protested with vehemence and animation against what he thought the encouragement of human servitude. He was no Protectionist, and his motives were above suspicion, but his studies had not gone deep either in political economy or in anything else. With all his brilliant gifts and accomplishments, he was a man of shallow and superficial mind. By the mere art of public speaking and preaching, which he possessed and cultivated to a super-eminent degree, he became more popular

Bishop Wilberforce.

1846. and more famous than any of his Episcopal brethren. His admirers used to call him, and he liked to be called, "The Great Lord Bishop of England."[1] His theological orthodoxy was unimpeachable, and, notwithstanding his devotion to social amusements, there is no reason to suppose that his unctuous piety was insincere. No one could make himself more agreeable, insomuch that he was courted and feasted by fine folk who forgot that he was a clergyman, and only remembered that he was a wit. But his knowledge was slender, his intellect had no bottom, and he exposed himself to ridicule by laying down the law upon scientific subjects of which he was totally ignorant. Although his career was a brilliant and a triumphant one, there was nothing permanent about his fame. He was supported on this occasion by a far abler man, Bishop Blomfield of London. But the Government carried their Bill without difficulty in a thin House.

They did not, however, get through even their first short session without blunders. They had turned out Sir Robert Peel by defeating a Coer-

Ireland. cion Bill for Ireland. But their Lord-Lieutenant, the Earl of Bessborough, told them that he could not keep Ireland quiet by means of the ordinary law, and an Arms Bill was accordingly introduced by the Chief Secretary, Mr. Labouchere.[2] This was no doubt a very different measure from the drastic and stringent Bill of Sir Robert Peel. But the inconsistency was glaring, the Radicals grumbled, and the second reading was only carried by thirty-three votes. A week afterwards Lord John Russell announced the abandonment of the

[1] *Life of Bishop Wilberforce*, vol. iii. p. 236. The second and third volumes of this work have great interest and value. The first was written for edification.

[2] Afterwards the first Lord Taunton.

Bill, and Lord Bessborough had to perform an impossible task.[1] A more serious error was the vicious system of relief works which, in the first fear of impending famine, Lord John proposed to the House of Commons on the same day, the 17th of August. A full account of the Irish famine, the most awful calamity which ever visited that land of misfortune, must be reserved for another chapter. Sir Robert Peel was accused of exaggerating the prospect. He came nearer the appreciation of it than any other man. But even his estimate fell far short of the truth. The Cabinet did not understand the situation, and went the wrong way to work. The supply of Indian corn, introduced by Sir Robert Peel before he left office, did more good than all their roads from nothing to nowhere. The policy of Lord John and his colleagues, as embodied in the Labour Rate Act, was that the Barony, or Petty Sessions, should specify to the Lord-Lieutenant the public works upon which the people could be best employed, and that the requisite funds should be advanced by the Treasury on loan. By the month of September, thirty thousand persons were engaged in making roads which were not wanted. By the end of November the number was four hundred thousand, who were receiving weekly or daily wages at the annual rate of five millions sterling. The potato crop of 1846 had been far worse than the potato crop of 1845, and the Irish people were on the brink of destruction. No sane Minister could, in such circumstances, have made himself responsible for the maintenance of the Corn Laws. The Government were stricken

1846.

[1] Fifteen Irish Magistrates, including O'Connell, who had been struck off the Commission of the Peace by the Tory Government for attending meetings in favour of Repeal, were restored by the Whigs (15th Aug.).

1846. with panic. That this is not too strong a phrase may be shown from Mr. Goulburn's letter to Sir Robert Peel, dated the 24th of November, and published in the third volume of the *Peel Papers*.[1] "The Chancellor of the Exchequer," says Mr. Goulburn, "called on me yesterday, and I had some conversation with him as to Ireland. Nothing can equal the picture which he himself drew of the state of that country, nor did he hesitate to avow an utter inability to devise any means of meeting the present difficulty satisfactorily, still more to provide for the yet greater evils which appeared to threaten it in future. He stated that in many parts of Ireland there was an absolute stagnation of private employment; that of land which usually grew corn, very little indeed was now cultivated or sown; that in many districts farming occupation has entirely ceased; and that there was, in consequence, reason to anticipate a tremendous deficiency in corn next year, merely from the refusal of occupiers to cultivate their land." The waste of public money at this time, though it sinks into insignificance when compared with the sickness and loss of life in Ireland, was deplorable. Colonel Douglas, one of the Government Inspectors, declared that "the relief works would answer no other purpose than that of obstructing the public conveyances." Sir James Graham, writing to Peel on the 9th of December, says, "Engineer officers are laying out drains on the lawns of country gentlemen, their pay being advanced by the public, and the unhappy estates being charged with the debt for the work so superintended." The acuteness of the distress had one good effect. It brought all classes in Ireland together. Protestants and Catholics, Orangemen and Repealers, joined in an endeavour to save the

[1] Pages 468–469.

people from starvation. One of those most active in assisting the Whig Viceroy was the Orange Tory, Lord Roden.

The Government of Lord John Russell was the first practically to consider the subject of Army Reform. But the matter was raised by a soldier and a private member, Major Layard. On the 3rd of August he called attention to the terms of enlistment, and to excessive flogging. Enlistment was then for life, and there was no limit to the number of lashes which the sentence of a court-martial could inflict. A recent case of suicide after flogging had shocked the public mind, and Major Layard, on that part of his subject, had the feeling of the House with him. Enlistment stood over. But the Duke of Wellington ordered that more than fifty lashes should not in future be given. The Duke, though not soft-hearted, still less sentimental, was essentially humane, and he expressed a hope to the House of Lords that flogging in the army might soon be abolished altogether. It was not, however, abolished for nearly thirty years after his death.

Flogging in the army.

One piece of legislation carried in 1846 has had more effect upon the habits and convenience of the people than many measures of far more ambitious scope and promise. This was the Small Debts Bill, which the Whigs took over from the Tories and carried into law. The Bill established the system of County Courts, without which the business of modern England would very soon come to a standstill. The title "County Court" is an old one, but the institution had fallen into practical disuse. There were some local and customary tribunals, Courts of Conscience and Courts of Request, exercising an ill-defined jurisdiction, and most inefficiently served. But all serious litigation was conducted in the Superior Courts at a

County Courts.

1846. cost which was often out of all proportion to the sum involved. The Bill provided for the creation of District Courts throughout England, each under a barrister of seven years' standing, appointed by the Lord Chancellor, and removable by him. They were to have jurisdiction in ordinary cases of tort,[1] or contract where the damages claimed did not exceed twenty pounds; libel, breach of promise, disputed title, and some other cases being excepted. The jurisdiction of these Courts has since been much extended, and the standard of their judges has been raised. But the principle of cheap and speedy justice in common matters of every day was for the first time established by Parliament in 1846.

[1] Tort means an actionable wrong not resulting from any breach of agreement between the parties.

CHAPTER II

PALMERSTON'S FOREIGN POLICY

LORD GREY told Charles Greville in 1848 that Lord John Russell had promised to control Palmerston, and prevent his foreign policy from becoming dangerous when the Government was formed in 1846.[1] If Lord John gave such an undertaking, he cannot be said to have kept it. Palmerston was quite as independent in Lord John's Cabinet as he had been in Lord Melbourne's. On the 10th of October 1846 the Queen of Spain and her sister the Infanta were married at Madrid. The Queen's husband was her cousin, Don Francis, Duke of Cadiz. The Infanta's was the Duke of Montpensier, son of Louis Philippe. These Spanish marriages excited in England, or at least in the vocal classes of England, from the Queen downwards, a storm of indignation. They were regarded, and in fact they were, a breach of the engagement given by the King of the French and his Minister, M. Guizot, to the Queen and Lord Aberdeen at Château d'Eu in 1843. The King and Guizot then undertook that the Duke de Montpensier should not marry the Infanta until the Queen was married and had issue. There is no possible justification for the behaviour of M. Guizot and his Sovereign. Not only did they break their words. They were parties to a low

1846. Palmerston and the Powers.

The Spanish marriages.

[1] "Greville Memoirs," 3rd June 1848.

1846. intrigue, for which they sacrificed the interests of Spain and the happiness of two lives. Queen Isabella was only sixteen, and she despised her cousin. It is certain that Louis Philippe wished the future Sovereign of Spain to be his grandchild, and that the Duke of Cadiz was deliberately chosen as a man unlikely to be a father. Those who knew the young Queen best were the most convinced that if she were not soon provided with a husband, she would provide herself with a lover. But there were other men she could have married with better prospects, as, for instance, the brother of Don Francis, Don Enrique. M. Guizot had a great career behind him, and his reputation is too high to be permanently lowered by this incident. His conduct, however, especially in a man making such lofty professions of religion and morality as were made by him, is liable to the severest censure. He was apparently inspired, like his master, with a mistrust of Palmerston so intense that it blinded him to the difference between right and wrong. Looking back at the miserable story from this distance of time, one can hardly understand how it affected British interests. Palmerston, however, was convinced that it did, and took it up with characteristic vigour. He even threatened, without telling the Prime Minister, to withdraw the British Ambassador from Paris. The communication of this threat, an oral one, to the French Government was stopped by Lord John, and it never got beyond the French Ambassador, M. de Saint Aulaire. But Palmerston succeeded in greatly embittering the relations of the two countries, and inflaming a quarrel which he would have done better to allay. The Ambassador at Paris was the Marquess of Normanby, who had succeeded the first Lord Cowley, the Duke of Wellington's brother. Lord Normanby showed a

singular want of tact, and went so far as to work with the Leaders of the Opposition, Thiers and Molé, in discrediting the Minister of the King to whom he was accredited. On the other hand, Mr. Bulwer,[1] the British Envoy at Madrid, was a partisan of Prince Leopold of Coburg, Prince Albert's cousin, whose pretensions to the Queen's hand infuriated France. Palmerston maintained, with literal truth, that he had himself never supported Prince Leopold's claims. But he very imprudently mentioned him in a despatch to Mr. Bulwer, and this was fuel to the flame.[2] Louis Philippe and Guizot had their way. The marriages were duly solemnised. They were not, as Palmerston rashly contended, a breach of the Treaty of Utrecht, which was directed against the union of the French and Spanish crowns. But they were a violation of a promise, and they were infamous in themselves. And what was the good of it all? The great satirist from whom Johnson imitated his *Vanity of Human Wishes* would have found in the fruits of this paltry knavishness a fine theme for declamation. Queen Isabella had several children, legitimate because born in wedlock, and one of them became King of Spain long after she herself had been expelled by her subjects from the throne. The Orleanist dynasty, which was to extend its glories through the Iberian Peninsula, had not two years to run. 1846.

Sed genus humanum damnat caligo futuri.[3]

Badly as Louis Philippe and his Minister came out of this transaction, Lord Palmerston cannot be said to have come out of it well. He had failed

[1] Afterwards Sir Henry Bulwer and Lord Dalling.

[2] In a public despatch to Bulwer, Palmerston drew up a list of available candidates for Queen Isabella's hand, and unfortunately put Prince Leopold, who was a Protestant, first. In a private letter he instructed Bulwer to support not Leopold but Don Enrique, the candidate of the Spanish Liberals. Lord Dalling's *Life of Palmerston*, iii. 228.

[3] But the darkness of the future is the doom of human kind.—Juvenal, vi. 556.

1846. in his object, which was to prevent the marriage of the Infanta with the French King's son, and he had brought the two great Western Powers to the verge of war for a question in which British interests were not perceptibly concerned. His most violent measures had been taken behind the back of the Prime Minister, and though Lord John manfully defended him to the French Government, the relations between the two most prominent members of the Cabinet had been severely strained. Lord Grey's anticipations were realised, though their realisation seemed to have no effect upon Lord Grey. The friendly understanding between England and France was at an end. For this untoward result France was chiefly, though not entirely, to blame, and it was upon France that the punishment fell.

The estrangement of England and France.

During the autumn of 1846 disturbances broke out in Galicia, and were suppressed with terrible cruelty by the Austrian Government. Austria complained that the revolt had been stimulated from Cracow, the little Republic, or free town, on the Vistula, which alone survived the disgraceful partition of Poland. The three Northern Powers — Austria, Russia, and Prussia — took advantage of the Galician rising to suppress the independence of Cracow, which henceforth became a part of the Austrian Empire. In doing so they plainly and directly violated the Treaty of Vienna, younger by a hundred years than the Treaty of Utrecht. It is possible, though not probable, that in face of a joint protest from England and France, the three Powers would have receded, and such a protest was proposed by France. But the Spanish marriages had occurred, and Palmerston refused to act with Guizot. In reply to Prince Metternich, from whom the declaration came that this act had been committed, the English Minister pointed out that for

The extinction of Cracow.

the first time since 1814 the Treaty of Vienna had been materially altered without the consent of all the signatory States. In this despatch Palmerston also laid down the wholesome and important doctrine that the rights of small and large States were equally sacred. Whatever may be thought of his conduct in the negotiations about the Spanish marriages, no fault can be found with his answer to Metternich. The extinction of a free State is, in any case, an outrage against humanity, and in this case it was also a flagrant violation of public law. It was not the business of England to maintain the Treaty of Vienna alone by force. But to pass over such an international scandal in silence would have been to acquiesce in wrong-doing because the wrong-doers were strong. The Emperor Nicholas was believed to be the instigator of this evil deed, though it was quite consistent with the lifelong policy of Metternich, and henceforth the commanding personality of Nicholas began to take hold of the British imagination as an enemy of freedom. 1846.

The Queen's Speech of 1847 was silent on the marriage of the Queen of Spain. But it referred to the marriage of her sister, and intimated that there had been a correspondence with the French Government on that subject. Mr. Disraeli flippantly observed that the proper course would have been to offer congratulations, and the Duke of Wellington said, according to Greville, that "the pother about the Treaty of Utrecht was all damned stuff."[1] Public opinion, however, was indignant at Louis Philippe's breach of faith, and did not appreciate Mr. Disraeli's sarcasm. A more serious reference to Cracow was put into the Queen's mouth, and the annexation was justly stigmatised as inconsistent with the faith of 1847.

[1] "Greville Memoirs," 15th Feb. 1847.

1847. treaties. Having been apprised of this paragraph, the representatives of the three Northern Powers did not attend the opening of Parliament. There the history of Cracow would naturally have come to an end. But Joseph Hume, who had a fixed belief that the world could be governed by pounds, shillings, and pence, bethought himself of an expedient for bringing home to Russia, at all events, the nature and extent of her misdeeds. After the French war the Dutch possessions in South Africa were sold to Great Britain, and, as a consequence of this sale, Great Britain gave a guarantee of a loan from Holland to Russia. It was the proposal of Mr. Hume that the interest on this loan should no longer be paid. Hume was a vigilant critic of the estimates, and his services to public economy were invaluable. But he took too much upon himself. His finger was in every pie; he spoke on every subject, and there was nothing upon which he was not prepared to pronounce an authoritative opinion. His proposal in respect of Cracow was simply fatuous. The mischief was done, and could not be undone without war. The breach of one engagement would have been an odd remedy for the breach of another with which it was totally unconnected, and the absurdity, as well as the scandal, would have been heightened by the fact that England's method of punishing lawlessness was the appropriation of money which did not belong to her. On this point Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel were entirely agreed. Both strongly condemned the annexation of Cracow. Both deprecated with equal earnestness the idea of refusing to honour a guarantee, and thus incidentally, among other things, throwing doubt upon our title to Cape Colony. There was no answer to these arguments, and Mr. Hume's resolution was ultimately withdrawn. But Lord George Ben-

Joseph Hume's suggestion.

March 4.

tinck and his "follower," Mr. Disraeli, could not let well alone. Lord George loudly applauded the policy of the Northern Powers, which was justly odious to nine-tenths of his countrymen, and Mr. Disraeli argued, with a sophistry not even persuasive, that the independence of Cracow was the subject of a separate provision which, though embodied in the Treaty, was no part of the Treaty itself. It is difficult to understand what motive the pair can have had except blind opposition to Sir Robert Peel. But Mr. Disraeli seldom spoke without saying something out of the way. After some strictures upon the Polish oligarchy which, though not strictly relevant, were true, he added, in words never to be forgotten: "It is not the number of a people that makes a great nation; a great nation is a nation which produces great men."

1847. Protectionist sympathy with despotism.

A much more vulnerable part of Palmerston's policy than either Cracow or the Spanish marriages was his interference with the affairs of Portugal. The Queen of Portugal, Donna Maria Pia, was a friend and contemporary of Queen Victoria. They had known each other since they were children, and there was a strong mutual attachment between them. In October 1846 an insurrection broke out in Portugal, not without grounds, and the throne of the young Queen was threatened. The British Government acted in the most peremptory manner, and ordered the fleet into the Tagus to support the authority of the Crown. The Queen of Portugal, thus protected, refused all concessions to her subjects, and the British navy was placed in the odious position of supporting an Absolutist Government against its justly dissatisfied subjects. That, however, to give Lord Palmerston his due, was not his intention. He insisted that the Cortes should be invoked, and the Constitution restored. To these conditions the

Palmerston and Portugal.

1847. Queen submitted. But the insurgents were either sceptical or dissatisfied; and on the 31st of March 1847 Sir Thomas Maitland seized their ships off Oporto. Having rendered this doubtful service to "our ancient ally," Lord Palmerston proposed a conference of the four Powers who had signed the Quadruple Alliance in 1834. Accordingly, on the 21st of May the representatives of Great Britain, Spain, France, and Portugal met in London. The result of their deliberations was an agreement that, besides the Constitutional arrangements already promised, there should be a full and general amnesty for the rebels. In the hands of a skilful advocate, such as Lord Palmerston himself, this might easily be cited as a triumph of Lord Palmerston's policy. But, as a matter of fact, the constituent bodies voted for Costa Cabral, the intriguer whom it had been Palmerston's special object to exclude, and a Cabralistic Ministry was formed, though Cabral was in exile. Besides, there remained the question, what business we had to meddle in the matter at all. No Opposition could well have let such a chance of attacking a Ministry pass by. Lord
June 15. Stanley took up the matter in the House of Lords, and made a very brilliant speech in favour of non-intervention, containing a severe attack upon Lord Palmerston. He failed, however, to secure a majority; and in the House of Commons, after a long debate, the House was counted out the same evening by the Protectionist whip, Mr. Newdigate. But this Parliamentary victory of the Government was not due to the merits of their case. There was dissension among the Radicals, and the Tories acted on no definite principle. Lord Stanley at that time of his life adopted the simple theory that it is the business of an Opposition to oppose. He never cared much for office, many as were the offices he held, and

his incurable levity made him reckless of consequences, so long as he could have a good fight, and let loose his magnificent oratory at the expense of his former friends. He had no more belief in the principle of non-intervention than he had in the five points of the Charter. He saw a good opening, and he took it. At the same time it must be admitted that the precedent set by Lord Palmerston upon this occasion was a very dangerous one. Lord John Russell and Mr. Macaulay, on his behalf and their own, laid stress upon the fact that they had compelled the Queen of Portugal to grant reforms. But they did not, because they could not, explain what it mattered to the British taxpayer, the provider of the fleet, whether she granted them or not. Consols would not have been much affected by sympathy with our ancient ally if Dom Miguel had dethroned the Queen, or if the Queen had banished Dom Miguel. The only argument which had any plausibility was that France and Spain would have intervened if England had refrained. Sir Robert Peel, however, gave his unreserved support to the Government; and the Duke of Wellington spoke for them in the House of Lords, where they had a majority of nineteen. Peel held that the country was committed by the Quadruple Alliance; and the Duke was affected by his memories of the Peninsular campaign. 1847.

The war of the Sonderbund.

But Lord Palmerston was a many-sided man, and he could frustrate intervention as well as further it. He took the former course in the case of Switzerland, where there was a curious rehearsal on a small scale in 1847 of the drama which convulsed the United States from 1861 to 1865. The war of the Sonderbund was a religious war; while the war in America was a moral war. But in both union was set against disruption, the Federation against the canton or the State. The

1847. Sonderbund was a league of the Catholic against the Protestant cantons. The Protestant cantons were the majority, and they wanted to expel the Jesuits from Switzerland. The Catholic minority objected, and formed themselves into a Secessionist League. On the 20th of July the Swiss Diet, by 13 votes to 7, declared the Sonderbund illegal. On the 4th of September the Jesuits were expelled, or, at least, a decree for their expulsion was issued. On the 4th of November General Dufour, in command of the Federal forces, took the field against the Sonderbund. He was a very skilful officer, who knew how to negotiate as well as how to fight; and by the end of November the Sonderbund had submitted to the inevitable with a good grace. Meanwhile the Absolutist Powers of the Continent, especially Austria, had been urging the collective interference of Europe. Palmerston, with incomparable astuteness, postponed the question from week to week, until it was too late to do anything; and at last, on the 4th of December, intervention, which would have been perfectly useless, was formally rejected. The Swiss might say of Palmerston what the Romans said of Fabius —

Unus homo nobis cunctando restituit rem.[1]

Lord Minto in Italy. No account of Lord Palmerston's foreign policy at this epoch would be complete without a reference to Lord Minto's Italian mission. This strange proceeding was made possible, though it was scarcely made dignified, by the peculiar circumstances of the time. In November 1847, when Lord Minto started on his travels, Italy was still what Metternich called her, a geographical expression. The Pope was a temporal sovereign, and Rome was only the

[1] "One man by dilatory tactics restored our prosperity." — From a fragment of Ennius.

capital of the Papal States. Florence belonged to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Milan and Venice were Austrian. Naples was the seat of government for the King of the Two Sicilies. The King of Sardinia possessed only Piedmont, Savoy, and Genoa, including Nice, besides the island from which he took his title; and his capital was Turin. The new Pope, Mastai Ferretti, Pio Nono, who had been elected the year before, was supposed to be a Liberal. His Liberalism, if it ever really existed, was only skin-deep, and did not survive two years of Pontifical power. But in 1847 he was on friendly terms with Charles Albert, the King of Sardinia, and at daggers drawn with Austria. The idea of a reforming Pope, though it turned out to be utterly deceptive, was then much in vogue, and Lord Palmerston resolved to make the most of it. There was no British embassy at Rome, and the state of the English law was sufficiently doubtful to prevent the Government from establishing one. Lord Minto, the Prime Minister's father-in-law, was a member of the Cabinet, and held the sinecure office of Privy Seal. He received no diplomatic appointment, but was instructed to express equal friendliness with the King of Sardinia and the Pope, that singular brace of Liberal allies. He was further to intimate that Austrian aggression upon Papal territory would not be permitted. But his main object was to obtain some assistance from the Pope in the government of Ireland. Such attempts have, under very different conditions, been made since, but they have always failed. The Irish are a very religious people; but they are also the most political people on the face of the earth, and, as O'Connell said, they take their religion, not their politics, from Rome. Lord Palmerston, who regarded all religions with Epicurean impartiality, wanted the Pope to "put down lawlessness" by

1847.

1847. restraining the priests who incited to it. He also pressed for a withdrawal of the Papal rescript denouncing the Queen's unsectarian colleges at Belfast and Galway as godless institutions. But Pius the Ninth never withdrew anything, and his rescript only echoed the language of ecclesiastical reaction. Moreover, Lord Palmerston himself was not in a conciliatory mood. Writing with his accustomed freedom to a friend and colleague, he assured Lord Minto that public opinion against the Irish priests at home was exasperated to the last degree, and that nothing would give the English people more satisfaction than to see a few of them hanged. The agent of such a principal could hardly hope for success, and Lord Minto did not succeed. Lord Clarendon, who became Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland on the death of Lord Bessborough in May 1847, had a staunch ally in Dr. Murray, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. But the Archbishop of Tuam, Dr. M'Hale, was quite intractable; and he was a better, or at least a more faithful representative of the Irish priesthood than Archbishop Murray. Both Lord Clarendon and Lord Palmerston, as well as Sir Robert Peel, were then favourable to more regular communication with the Court of Rome. But they desired to use the Pope for their own purposes; and if His Holiness had not been capable of discovering that fact for himself, his advisers at the Vatican were more than capable of finding it out for him.

CHAPTER III

THE IRISH FAMINE

On the 19th of January 1847 the Parliament of 1841 met for the last time. The date was earlier than usual, but in the opinion of many it was not so early as it ought to have been. The circumstances of Ireland had been growing rapidly worse throughout the previous autumn, and were now appalling. Three-fourths of the potato crop and one-fourth of the oat crop had failed. The oats were exported; the potatoes were the food of the people. The estimated loss on both was sixteen millions sterling. A true and just account of the situation, written with an admirable mixture of sympathy and intelligence, may be found in Mr. Disraeli's *Life of Lord George Bentinck*. "It was said," writes Mr. Disraeli, "by the Royal Commission over which Lord Devon presided, that the Irish people were the worst housed, the worst fed, and the worst clothed of any in Europe. They live in mud cabins littered upon straw; their food consists of dry potatoes, of which they are often obliged to stint themselves to one spare meal. Sometimes a herring or a little milk may afford them a pleasing variety, but sometimes also they are driven to seaweed and to wild herbs. Dwelling in hovels and feeding upon roots, they are clothed in rags. Those were the ordinary circumstances of Ireland, and to such a state of affairs famine was now added with

1847. The Irish famine.

In 1844. Disraeli on Ireland.

1847. all its attendant horrors, pestilence and death. In the southern and western parts of the country the population was decimated; 10,000 persons at the meeting of Parliament had died in the Union of Skibbereen, which numbered 100,000 souls. Scenes were enacted worthy of the page of Josephus or Thucydides. It was truly and tersely said by Lord John Russell that it was a famine of the thirteenth century with a population of the nineteenth. That under such circumstances, and especially in such a country, crime should have increased is not remarkable; but it is strange, and it is interesting, that the character of that crime should have altered. The increase in offences was entirely in offences against property. Burglaries abounded, and highway robbery was almost for the first time introduced. Agrarian outrage greatly diminished; the influence of the secret societies died away; the spirit of combination ceased, and although the offences were numerous, there was no difficulty in obtaining convictions or in enforcing the law. All of which shows that the difficulty of vindicating the law in cases where the tenure or occupation of land is concerned does not arise from any inherent repugnance to order and justice in the hearts of the Irish multitude."[1] There are some sentences in this striking passage which may have been written to justify the author's vote against the Coercion Bill of Sir Robert Peel, and there are others which had ceased to be true before many months were over. But most of it has a permanent value, and makes one doubt whether even Mr. Gladstone, who did so much for them, understood the Irish people so thoroughly as Mr. Disraeli, who never did anything for them at all.

The Protectionist Party.

At the beginning of this session Lord George Bentinck, with his Protectionist followers, including

[1] Disraeli's *Life of Lord George Bentinck*, pp. 350–351.

Mr. Disraeli, crossed the floor of the House, and sat opposite to the Government. Between the Protectionist leaders in the two Houses there was no cordiality. Lord Stanley neither liked nor respected Lord George Bentinck. But he had for the moment to work with him. Lord John Russell, as Prime Minister, took his full share, and perhaps rather more than his share, of Parliamentary business. He did not forget that he was First Lord of the Treasury as well as Premier, and though his Chancellor of the Exchequer was an abler man than Peel's, Sir Charles Wood had no more independent authority than had Mr. Goulburn. But there was a power behind the throne. On the 15th of January 1847 Mr. Pemberton of the Treasury wrote to Mr. Cardwell: "If you were to come over to the Treasury you would not know yourself. Trevelyan is First Lord, and Chancellor of the Exchequer, has a new room, with four private secretaries and three commissariat clerks, and the whole has been left to him." Mr., afterwards Sir, Charles Trevelyan, was then and for many years afterwards Assistant Secretary to the Treasury, upon which Ireland at that moment depended. He was a man of great ability, of untiring industry, and of inflexible purpose. In India he had braved unpopularity and official censure by standing up against corruption in high places. Mr. Pemberton doubtless exaggerates his influence, and he must not be held responsible for the policy pursued. His Indian experience, valuable as it was, had its drawbacks when applied to a totally different population.

1847.

Sir Charles Trevelyan.

Lord Rosebery pleads on behalf of Pitt that nobody could have been expected to anticipate the enormous magnitude of the French Revolution. Burke anticipated it, and so did Fox, though their estimates may have been in other respects erroneous. The Irish famine of 1847 baffled all calcula-

Starvation in Ireland.

1847. tions, even O'Connell's, and it is hardly fair to blame the Government for not being wiser than the whole world. Their measures were not so much inadequate as unwise. The relief works, as we have seen, were a failure, and the Lord-Lieutenant took upon himself to go beyond the provisions of the law. Parliament readily indemnified him. All classes in Great Britain, as well as in Ireland, were animated by the single desire to save the Irish peasantry from starvation, and from the deadly fever caused by famine. The city of London showed its customary munificence. Subscriptions poured in from every part of England, and from most parts of Europe, including Turkey. The Society of Friends organised a deputation of succour, in reference to which Mr. Cobden truly said that in braving the pestilence bred by want its members displayed as much heroism as any soldier on a forlorn hope, though they were not mentioned in despatches, and received no reward.[1] Lord John Russell had to tell the House of Commons that half a million men, representing four million souls, were employed in road-making. "A nation," as Mr. Disraeli put it, "breaking stones upon the roads." The wages paid were about £160,000 a week. The cost, which was largely exceeded, Lord John estimated at £7,000,000. For the administration of these funds there were 500 pay clerks, nearly 3000 check clerks, and about 7000 overseers. Lord Bessborough imposed task work as a test for relief. But the wages were higher than could be earned elsewhere, and farmers left their land to receive famine pay from the Government. Labourers were taken away from

[1] "In the midst of a scene which no field of battle ever equalled in danger, in the number of its slain, or the sufferings of the surviving, these brave men moved as calm and undismayed as though they had been in their own houses" (Morley's *Life of Cobden*, ii. 140). One of them was William Edward Forster, afterwards member for Bradford, Vice-President of the Council and Chief Secretary for Ireland.

the harvest both in England and Ireland, so that in Great Britain there was a scarcity of labour. The Chancellor of the Exchequer confessed that the Labour Rate Act had broken down. Although Lord John Russell protested that it was impossible for the Government to feed the people, they had to make the attempt. Total and immediate repeal had not been carried in 1846. There was still a 4s. duty on imported corn, and even after 1849, when the full effect of the repeal was to be seen, there remained a 1s. duty, which was not taken off for twenty years. The 4s. duty was now suspended by general consent, and so were the navigation laws, which interfered with the bringing of supplies by foreign ships. A proposal for reclaiming waste lands, which meant bogs, was abandoned by the advice of Sir Robert Peel. Mr. Disraeli, writing in a spirit of commendable fairness to the Whig Government, points out that terrible as was the death-rate of 1847 in Ireland, which mounted up to 100 a day, every effort was made to cope with it when once the gravity of the situation was realised, and that if thousands died hundreds of thousands were saved from death. Neither Lord John Russell nor Sir Charles Wood were by nature sympathetic. But Lord John was a statesman, and Sir Charles was the most conscientious of public servants. They did what they could, and, given the circumstances of the two countries, it may be doubted whether any Government could have done more. They recognised that the Irish famine was an imperial calamity, and that part at least of the burden must be distributed over the taxpayers of the United Kingdom. They therefore proposed that when an instalment of the famine debt fell due the whole of that instalment should be wiped out upon half of it being paid, though the bulk of the debt would be retained,

1847.

Suspensory measures.

1847. and was retained until Mr. Gladstone extended the income-tax to Ireland. The test of labour, which had failed, was removed, and relief was given simply to destitution. A permanent change (if a change can be permanent) was made in the Irish Poor Law, which was assimilated to the English Act of 1834 by the allowance of out-door relief. To lessen the strain upon the available sources of corn the use of sugar in brewing was for the first time permitted. This salutary application of Free Trade was no mere device for the moment. It had, and still has, important and beneficial consequences in the encouragement which, aided by science, it gives to light and wholesome beer.

Other measures of relief.

Lord John Russell defended himself with much eloquence and power for not having undertaken by gigantic subsidies to feed a starving people. If he had done it, no defence would have been required. But it is almost certain that he would have failed, and then the state of Ireland would have been worse than ever. Mr. Disraeli puts this point with a lucidity which cannot be excelled. "When," he says, "a Minister enters the market, all private merchants withdraw; they cannot compete with a rival who seeks no profit in his transactions; and though he thus appears to assume the advantageous position of a purchaser without contest, a dealer who has undertaken the responsibility of feeding a nation has, in reality, no option. Prices therefore rise, and considerably. But this, though a great, is not the chief evil. Commerce is not a mere affair of gross purchase; it is a pursuit of skill, of traditionary means, of local knowledge and organised connection. The employment of capital must be combined with all these incidents to render commerce not merely profitable, but competent to supply a demand. The imports of the Government would therefore not only be expensive, but they

would be scanty. The Government would have to pay more for a less quantity than they require." [1] Mr. Disraeli had not sat behind Peel for nothing. He might call himself a follower of Lord George Bentinck. He was at heart and by conviction a Peelite. This did not, however, prevent him from supporting Lord George's extravagant proposal to squander sixteen millions of public money in making Irish railways which, as the event proved, could perfectly well be made by private enterprise. Lord John Russell's apologetic speech had been generally admired by foes as well as by friends, and by no one more than by the Protectionist Leader. The two men were old acquaintances, though they had little in common, and their "noble friendliness" annoyed Sir Robert Peel, who cared more for such personal matters than a great man should. Lord George was allowed to bring in his Bill on the 4th of February. To let it go further was impossible. Lord George Bentinck's speech in introducing it was his best, and may be studied in Hansard by those who still feel an interest in his singular career. Before the second reading, Lord John summoned his followers and told them plainly that he could not retain his position if the financial affairs of the country were taken out of the hands of the Government. The Bill was rejected on the second reading by a very large majority. Sir Robert Peel, in opposing it, enunciated in clear terms the fundamental principle, so often forgotten before and since, that public credit is public money, and that whatever diminishes the borrowing power impairs the material resources of the State. The prospects of the measure were not improved by the appearance of Mr. George Hudson's name on the back of it. The once notorious, now forgotten, "Railway King," then

1847.

Lord George Bentinck's plan.

[1] *Life of Lord George Bentinck*, p. 361.

1847. member for Sunderland, and Lord Mayor of York, had the assurance to tell the House of Commons that he was quite satisfied with the throne on which he sat.[1] So far the Government had triumphed. But Lord George Bentinck's turn was to come. To go tiger-hunting with Sir Charles Wood involved other perils besides the tiger. April was not over before that vigilant and consistent guardian of the public purse applied to the House for a loan of six hundred thousand pounds to a couple of Irish railways. This was too much for Peel, who opposed the loan with civility, though not without contempt. Lord George, with unusual moderation, patted the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the back, but his patronage must have been more galling than Sir Robert's disapproval. The motion was carried, because criticism was almost put to silence by the state of Ireland. Yet it was not two months since Lord John Russell had clearly demonstrated that of the money spent on making a railway only one-fourth was paid in wages, and that it was not the famine-stricken districts where lines were most required.

An Irish Budget.

The shadow of Irish misery was over all politics, especially financial politics. Sir Charles Wood's first Budget was an almost exclusively Irish one. He proposed to borrow eight millions in aid of the sufferers, and even Mr. Hume did not object. It is strange and significant that in those dark days, destined to become ere long still darker, Lord John should have described Ireland as not over-populated. The population of Ireland was then about eight millions. It is now less than five. After the famine the tide of emigration set in full and strong to the United States. Econo-

[1] Hudson was at that time believed to be a millionaire. But he failed soon afterwards in discreditable circumstances, and died a pauper after living on charity.

mists regarded this as a wholesome movement, which deserved sympathy and assistance. How disastrous were its political consequences every Englishman and every American knows. 1847.

While the Irish famine was at its height, the titular head of the Irish Government, and the greatest of living Irishmen, died within a few days of each other. Lord Bessborough was a party manager rather than a statesman. In the House of Commons, as Lord Duncannon, he had been a perfect whip. A genial, popular Irish gentleman, he was deeply and universally respected in his native country. His successor belonged to a very different type. Lord Clarendon was a much abler administrator than Lord Bessborough. He was a statesman of the good old Whig type, high-minded, public-spirited, and supercilious. He liked Catholics the better the more they resembled Protestants, and his idea of an Irish patriot was an Anglicised Irishman. He accepted the Viceroyalty on the understanding that the office was to be speedily abolished, and a Secretaryship of State for Ireland created in its place. This was a favourite project of Lord John's, but he was never able to carry it out. Daniel O'Connell died at Genoa on his way to Rome on the 15th of May 1847, aged seventy-two. He had out-lived his power, and his fame was not revived for many years after his death. He had almost retired from politics, and his last speech in Parliament, delivered on the 9th of February, was a pathetic plea for the starving victims of the famine. No reference to his death was made in the illustrious Assembly where he had been for sixteen years so prominent a figure. Young Ireland had broken away from him, as young England broke away from Peel. The best and most brilliant part of his career ended with the achievement of Catholic Emancipation in 1829.

Death of Lord Bessborough.

His successor.

Death of O'Connell.

1847. That was largely his doing, and his name should have been included in Peel's celebrated list.[1] His efforts for the repeal of the Union entirely failed, and he was never trusted nor understood by the English people. He had few of their virtues and none of their vices. Neither his religion nor his morality was theirs. Yet he wished to conciliate them, and he rendered them a memorable service by his persistent advocacy of Free Trade.

[1] The credit belongs to others, and not to me. It belongs to Mr. Fox, to Mr. Grattan, to Mr. Plunket, to gentlemen opposite, and to an illustrious and right honourable friend of mine who is now no more (Canning). — Peel's speech on the second reading of the Catholic Emancipation Bill, *Collected Speeches*, i. 742.

CHAPTER IV

THE COURT AND THE PEOPLE

THE Queen and Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg had now been married for six years. They had five children. Their Court was a model of decorum, and their domestic relations were perfect. The Queen performed all the duties of State with the most conscientious punctuality. The Prince was zealous in the encouragement of literature, science, and art. Yet they were extremely unpopular, as a glance at the chief comic paper of those days, and of these days, will show. Prince Albert's early death, an excellent clearer of ill fame, obliterated the memory of his real or imaginary faults, and long before the close of her unparalleled reign Queen Victoria had established a reputation such as no sovereign before her enjoyed. But in 1847 they were both regarded with jealous suspicion, and to say a word for the Prince outside a limited circle was to incur the suspicion of snobbishness. Every penny voted by Parliament for any purpose connected with the Court was grudged, and the two chiefs of English society were represented by *Punch* as importunate beggars. For the Queen herself there was a sort of involuntary respect, and, if she could have married an Englishman, she would have anticipated by many years the loyal devotion which she afterwards came to inspire. But the British public

1847.

The Court.

Prince Albert's unpopularity.

1847. could not forgive Prince Albert for being a German. Nor did his tastes commend themselves to a generation whose real hero was Lord Palmerston. The Prince neither raced nor gambled. He was "unredeemed by a single vice." Though he occasionally shot pheasants, his tastes were literary, artistic, and musical. He was even known to sing, and to play the piano. He admired and appreciated Italian Masters who in England at that time were almost unknown. These accomplishments would now be regarded as highly honourable and meritorious. They were then thought to be undignified and effeminate. A more respectable ground for the dislike and distrust of the Queen's husband was his interference with politics. Sir Theodore Martin's elaborate and authoritative biography proves that in a delicate and difficult position the Prince always did his duty as he conceived it both to the country and to the Queen. But he was not an Englishman, and he could not make himself one. Under the British Constitution he was nobody, and even the Queen found herself unable to give him social precedence over their own son. As a matter of fact he was a Mayor of the Palace, a personal rather than a constitutional power. The Queen consulted him about everything, and placed absolute reliance upon his judgment. He was intensely interested in politics, especially, as was natural, in foreign affairs. He saw all the official papers; he knew all the secrets of the Cabinet; he was present at the most confidential interviews between the Queen and her Ministers. He even altered Lord Palmerston's despatches, though it is only fair to say that Lord Palmerston usually altered them back again.

The Prince in politics.

All this was unavoidable. The Queen's husband could not be turned out of the room, nor could the Queen be prevented from telling him whatever

was in her mind. But it was an anomalous state of things, and one which the British Constitution does not recognise at all. It was authority without responsibility, influence without restraint. Yet few men could have discharged such functions so irreproachably as the Prince. He had an old head upon young shoulders. He was grave, thoughtful, and prudent. But, as Macaulay says of Nottingham, he held the prerogative as high as he decently could. Like George the Third, who was a German, although he gloried in the name of Briton, Prince Albert wished to see the Crown independent of parties, and asserting its ancient rights. He detested Disraeli. But it is not impossible that if he had survived Palmerston, he might have found that incomparable courtier a pliant instrument of his designs. With such men as Russell and Palmerston the Prince could not hope to do much, except to set them against each other, and that he did. But he gave them an amount of advice which they neither expected nor desired, and much of it was exceedingly good. The fact is that the Prince's own instincts, both in politics and in religion, were thoroughly Liberal. His absolutist tendencies were derived from Baron Stockmar, a professor of the statesmanship which can be learned from books. Whiggery he hated, because it made a puppet of the Crown, and Lord John was a typical Whig. Yet in some respects Lord John, though no courtier, was preferable to Sir Robert, who would tolerate no interference from any quarter whatsoever. 1847.

On the 27th of February Prince Albert was elected Chancellor of the University of Cambridge in succession to the Duke of Northumberland. When Dr. Whewell, the famous Master of Trinity, conveyed to His Royal Highness a Memorial requesting him to stand, the Prince accepted the The Cambridge election.

1847. invitation on the understanding that there would be no contest. But a contest there was. Lord Powis came forward, and the Prince then wished to withdraw. This, however, his supporters earnestly requested him not to do, and on the advice of Sir Robert Peel, who should on strict Constitutional principles, not being a Minister, have declined to give it, he went to the poll. His majority was not large, and the University was bitterly reproached for its alleged lack of independence. Yet if the personal qualifications of the two candidates were alone regarded, the Prince was certainly the better man. He was studious, highly cultivated, and well able to follow with intelligence the progress of science, for which the mathematical training of Cambridge has done so much. Lord Powis's contribution to the sum of human endeavour was a successful resistance to the union of two Welsh dioceses, Bangor and St. Asaph. He was brought out partly as a rebuke to the polypragmatic officiousness of Dr. Whewell, and partly as a protest against the Government of the backstairs. The purity of Prince Albert's motives is unquestionable, and he suffered from not being able to defend himself in public. But Englishmen, considering their history, are not to be blamed for regarding with disfavour a position for which there had been no nominal parallel since the reign of Queen Anne, and no real parallel at all.

Prince Albert had been severely censured in some quarters for attending the House of Commons, and sitting under the gallery, when Sir Robert Peel expounded his policy of Free Trade. This is a good illustration of the captious criticism to which he was subject. He was not the Sovereign, his presence did not interrupt a debate, and though he notoriously sympathised with the Minister, the fact can hardly have turned a single vote in the

House of Commons. In matters where the prerogative of the Crown was not directly concerned the Prince was what would even now be called a Liberal, and he had a genuine zeal for social reform. Philanthropic institutions found in him an active and a generous patron, while he supported all schemes which tended to raise the condition of the labouring classes. The year 1847 was one of such deep and dire distress that it softened men's hearts, inclining them to deeds of mercy and benevolence. The Highlands and Islands of Scotland suffered only less severely than Ireland. Even in England the price of corn rose to a hundred and two shillings a quarter. If the harvest had not been a good one, the sufferings of the poor would have been frightful. In the midst of all this hardship and privation, if not on account of it, Parliament passed a most useful and humane Bill. This was the Factory Act, which limited the hours of labour for women and children in factories to ten hours a day. The Bill was introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Fielden, member for Lancashire, but its real author was Lord Ashley, one of the purest and noblest characters on the political stage. Except that his piety was a trifle too ostentatious, and that for a good Christian he was a thought too proud of his rank, Lord Ashley, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury, might well be called faultless from a moral point of view. Intellectually, no doubt, he was narrow, holding that evangelical religion was the only true one, and he would not have hesitated to pronounce the damnation of either the first Lord Shaftesbury or the third. But he led a long and consistent life of laborious self-denial, devoted to the spiritual and material welfare of his fellow-creatures. He was never rich, and he always gave away more than he could afford. His powers of speech were

1847.

The Prince's philanthropy.

The Ten Hours Act.

Lord Ashley.

1847. remarkable, and there was no better chairman of a public meeting. He had a stern authoritative manner, which harmonised more with the austerity of his faith than with the beneficence of his aims. He had made the subject of a ten hours' day his own, and, in or out of Parliament, he gave his best energies to the cause. Having been elected in 1841 as a Protectionist, and having been converted in 1846 to Free Trade, his high and sensitive honour led him to resign his seat for the county of Dorset, and he was thus a private individual when his Bill passed. No measure could have more fitly inaugurated Barry's and Pugin's new Houses of Parliament, which were used for the first time this year.[1] The ground had been prepared by others besides Lord Ashley. Mrs. Browning's "Cry of the Children," whatever may be thought of it as a poem, had by its pathos and sincerity appealed to the conscience of the nation. The Government were divided on the subject. The Prime Minister and the Home Secretary voted in favour of the Bill. The Chancellor of the Exchequer voted against it. It filled Sir James Graham, as did most public events of his time, with dismal apprehensions for the future. We were to be ruined by the competition of foreign workmen, who required no leisure, so long as they could have food and sleep. It was gravely argued that women and children ought not to be protected because their protection would involve a shortening of hours for men. The assumption was correct. The consequence followed. But the argument is absurd. That Parliament should not directly curtail the labour of men is an intelligible doctrine. That it should not interfere with the labour of women and children for fear of the effect upon men is nonsense,

The Government divided.

[1] Only the House of Lords was actually occupied in 1847. The new House of Commons was not ready for use till 1852.

and to state the proposition is to refute it. All the great and splendid services which John Bright rendered his country cannot efface the memory of the speeches he made against this Bill. They were inspired not by any broad view of economic policy, but by a tradesman's jealousy of restrictions upon his trade. It is certain that Lord George Bentinck and others supported the Bill because they wished to revenge themselves upon the manufacturers for abolishing Protection. But, on the other hand, it is equally true that members of the Anti-Corn Law League had called upon the workmen to go for Free Trade first, and had promised them shorter hours afterwards. Sir Robert Peel opposed the Bill for reasons very different from Mr. Bright's. In the case of colonial sugar Sir Robert did not carry his Free Trade far enough. In the case of the Ten Hours Bill he carried it too far, or rather applied it where it had no legitimate application. He chose to assume that a ten hours' day would mean less production, and therefore lower wages, than a day of twelve hours. The contrary proved to be the case. All work and no play makes an unproductive labourer. Wages did not fall in consequence of the Act, nor did production diminish. But the health of the working population was improved, and with their health their morals. Sir Robert Peel was absorbed by the one idea, perfectly sound in itself, that high wages were the means of providing workmen with opportunities for using their spare time. But what if he has no spare time to use? In the House of Lords, as in the House of Commons, Ministers took opposite sides. The bishops did themselves honour, and increased the influence of the Church, by giving a solid support to the Bill. Most of them voted for the repeal of the corn laws. They were less reactionary then than they had been before, and afterwards became

1847.

Opposition of John Bright;

of Sir Robert Peel.

Support of the bishops.

1847.

again. The Bill had now passed the Houses of Parliament. It had still to pass the Courts of Law.

National education.

In 1847 a modest but a not unimportant step was taken towards the systematic education of the people. On the 29th of April Lord John Russell explained his plan for defraying from the taxes one-third of the money required for elementary teaching. The immediate sum for which he asked was only £100,000. But provision was taken for anything up to two millions, if the amount of private subscriptions justified it. This was not the first vote for education. The House of Commons had granted money for the purpose since 1835. Now, however, the system was to be automatic, the grant increasing as the subscriptions increased. Almost the whole of the grant was to be received by church schools. Most Non-conformists, except the Wesleyans, objected to the endowment of denominational schools. The Roman Catholics were prevented from obtaining their share by the fact that they did not use the Authorised Version of the Scriptures. Peel strongly urged that they should be included. Otherwise he supported the Government, and pleaded, with a religious fervour he very seldom exhibited, the sacred duty of teaching children the truth. Lord John's proposals were resisted on principle by Roebuck, Bright, and other Radicals, because education was not the business of the State. A State which does not make education its business will forfeit its business to States which do. Macaulay, in a speech of great power and beauty, declared that the schoolmaster was a surer guardian of life and property than the policeman or the judge. The resolutions were carried by an enormous majority, and the House, with almost as near an approach to unanimity, rejected the proposal of a conscience clause. At the same time with

Non-conformist opposition.

Exclusion and Catholics.

Bright and Macaulay.

these strictly sectarian resolutions was passed the Bill creating the Diocese of Manchester, and establishing the principle that a bishop need not necessarily sit in the House of Lords.[1] 1847. Bishopric of Manchester.

The reform of the army was first seriously undertaken in the last session of this Parliament, when for the old machinery of unlimited enlistment was substituted a term of ten, or in some cases of twelve years. It is difficult to understand how the old system can have endured so long. The Duke of Wellington told Lord Stanhope in 1831 that the English soldiers were the scum of the earth, and that many of them enlisted for drink.[2] It must thus have been a common thing for a young fellow of eighteen or twenty to take the Queen's shilling, and give up his liberty for the rest of his life, when more than half unconscious of what he was about. Of course desertions were numerous. It is a wonder that they were not universal. Yet the Duke said to Lord Stanley about the Government and this very reform, "They have got a damned good army, and they want to make it a damned bad one."[3] Such was the language of the Commander-in-Chief. His conduct showed the courageous inconsistency which often distinguished him. He spoke against the Bill in the House of Lords, and he voted for it. It passed, and none of his predictions were fulfilled. Indeed, experience proved, not that the new term was too short, but that it was too long. The credit for this salutary change belongs in the first instance to Lord Grey, who, as Secretary for the Colonies, was, according to the arrangement of Short service.

[1] The junior bishop, unless he held the See of London, Durham, or Winchester, was to be left out. Since 1847 several new bishoprics have been founded, but the number of lords spiritual has not been increased.

[2] Stanhope's *Notes of Conversations with the Duke of Wellington*, 2nd ed., pp. 14, 18.

[3] "Greville Memoirs," 30th April 1847.

1847. those days, also Secretary for War. Its authorship did not commend itself to the Duke, who regarded Lord Grey as little better than a Radical, and a Radical as little better than a thief.

The General Election of 1847. The Parliament elected in 1841 was dissolved on the 23rd of July 1847, having completed the term of six years to which custom has reduced the full period allowed by the Septennial Act. In an elaborate address to the electors of Tamworth Sir Robert Peel vindicated his commercial policy. But the country was not excited, and the elections were held in unusual calm. The result was, upon the whole, satisfactory to the Government. There were returned 325 Ministerialists, 226 Protectionists, and 105 Conservatives who had voted for Free Trade. Thus, although Lord John Russell had not a clear majority of the whole House, he stood in very little danger of defeat, because the two parties of the Opposition were more hostile to each other than they were to him. The personal changes in the House were not numerous, but

Baron Rothschild's return. some of them were important. A Jew, Baron Lionel Rothschild, became a colleague of the Prime Minister in the representation of London, though he could not, as the law then stood, take his seat. Lord George Bentinck remained member for King's Lynn. Mr. Disraeli became member for the county of Buckingham, where he had recently purchased the Hughenden estate. Mr. Gladstone, after an absence of eighteen months, during the first six of which he was a Secretary of State, re-entered Parliament as member for the University of Oxford. But the strangest and least creditable

Macaulay's defeat. incident in the election was Macaulay's defeat at Edinburgh. Lord Campbell, then Chancellor of the Duchy, puts it down, with characteristic refinement, to "Tom's manners." The ostensible, and more probable cause was Macaulay's vote in favour

of Maynooth, though it is said that a cry for cheap whisky was not without effect, the Government having refused to lower the duty on that beverage. In any case the world gained far more than the House of Commons or the Cabinet lost. For Macaulay resigned the office of Paymaster, though not for a year after he had forfeited his seat, and devoted himself entirely to that great historic work which, notwithstanding all his devotion, remains a mere fragment of what it should have been. Lord Granville succeeded him in the Cabinet, which thus became, it was remarked, the most purely aristocratic since the days of Henry Pelham. 1847.

It was not intended that the new Parliament should meet before the beginning of 1848. But an autumn session was required by a financial crisis. Before the end of April, Mr. Hume, who studied the money market, declared that the city had not been so agitated since the great panic of 1825. In order to raise their Irish loan of eight millions promptly, the Government had been obliged to offer special terms for payment in advance. Throughout the summer the financial situation grew steadily worse, the reserve in the Bank of England fell dangerously low, and no other bank had any reserve at all. Fifteen of the largest houses in London stopped payment during September. Firms of the highest respectability failed in Manchester, Liverpool, and Glasgow. Private credit was paralysed, and on the 1st of October the rate of interest on loans was 60 per cent. About the causes of this panic there was at the time much dispute; but they are clear enough now. The crash was the direct and inevitable result of the "railway mania." The speculative classes had been living on their capital, and that is a process which must come to an end. These events put to a severe test the Bank Charter Act

The financial crisis.

1847. of 1844. The author of that statute was Sir Robert Peel, but he is understood to have taken the idea from Jones Loyd, Lord Overstone. The idea was to separate the currency from the banking department, and to limit the issue of bank notes. The sum of £14,000,000 sterling was fixed as the highest point to which the issue might go in excess of bullion.[1] This policy of restriction had against it the high theoretical authority of John Mill, and the high practical authority of Thomas Baring. But it has now been the law for sixty years, and no serious attempt has been made to repeal it. On the other hand, if a panic be sufficiently severe, the law is broken, and Parliament is asked for an indemnity. In 1847 the Government held out as long as they well could. Supported by Sir Robert Peel, they refused to interfere before the General Election, and for some time after it. Consols fell to 79, and exchequer bills were at a discount of 35 per cent. At last the Governor and the Deputy-Governor of the Bank went to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and told him that in twenty-four hours credit would be stopped. Then, on the 25th of October, Sir Charles Wood wrote what is called a "letter of license," authorising the directors to replenish the bank reserve, which was empty, from the currency reserve, which was full. The effect was magical, and showed how much imagination has to do with even financial panics. Although the directors did not act upon the authority given them, credit and confidence were restored, and the crisis was at an end. It is obvious that no such speedy and efficacious remedy could have been applied if there had been no Bank Charter Act. For in that case notes would already have been issued to meet public requirements, the

The Bank Charter Act.

[1] This has since been raised to £15,000,000 by the extinction of other banks of issue.

currency would have been depreciated (for every note on the Bank of England is a legal tender), and the evil would not have been confined to the speculative portion of the community. The law was not on this occasion actually broken. The leave given to break it if necessary was enough. But Parliament was nevertheless assembled. 1847.

"Parliament," says Mr. Greville (21st Nov. 1847), "never met in more difficult and distressed times: complete disorganisation, famine and ruin in Ireland, financial difficulty, general alarm and insecurity here, want of capital, want of employment." Greville exaggerates. The worst, except in Ireland, was over. Sir Charles Wood moved, and carried with the powerful aid of Peel, a committee of inquiry "into the causes of the recent commercial distress, and how far it had been affected by the laws for regulating the issue of bank notes payable on demand." This committee could find no case against the Bank Charter Act. One of the ablest men who ever discussed finance, if not one of the ablest financiers, writing in 1873, said that "the Act of 1844 was only a subordinate matter in the Money Market."[1] That may be so. But we must remember that when an Act has been passed which affects the ordinary business of life as the Bank Charter Act does, it operates so imperceptibly that practical men think of it as little as they think of the atmosphere. The autumn session.

The proposed violation of the Charter Act was not the only reason for calling the new Parliament together at once. The state of Ireland was chaotic, and Lord Clarendon was demanding a stringent measure of coercion. He did not get it, and his hints of resignation were unheeded. A Bill was, however, introduced by Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, and as such then responsible for Irish coercion.

[1] *Lombard Street*, by Walter Bagehot, p. 3.

1847. the maintenance of order not merely in England, but throughout the United Kingdom.[1] Sir George Grey's Bill excited so little opposition that only 14 Irish members voted against it, and the total minority fell short of 20 votes. It was, indeed, far milder than any one outside the Cabinet expected, and Mr. John O'Connell, a son of the Liberator, frankly confessed that its leniency surprised him. Sir Theodore Martin, in his *Life of the Prince Consort*, reads the Whigs a severe lecture upon the Nemesis which overtook them for their unpatriotic conduct in voting against the Coercion Bill of Sir Robert Peel. But to this Sir Spencer Walpole, in his biography of Lord John Russell, has furnished a conclusive reply. The two Bills were so entirely different that to call them by a common name, though perhaps inevitable, is also inevitably misleading. Coercion is a convenient and appropriate term for measures which in social emergencies abridge freedom to put down crime. It is an historical accident, though one of much significance, that since the repeal of the six Acts, such measures have only been passed for Ireland. But there is coercion and coercion. Sir Robert Peel's Bill would have punished with transportation men who had no reasonable excuse for being out of doors after nightfall. Lord John Russell's Bill merely prohibited the use of arms without a license in districts proclaimed by the Lord-Lieutenant; gave the police more stringent rights of search; and made it a crime not to assist a constable in the

[1] No formal separation of powers has been made by Parliament, and, theoretically, the position of the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant was the same then as it is now. In the case of Scotland a new office has been created. The process by which the Home Secretary ceased to be responsible for Irish affairs was a gradual one, and so lately as 1882 Sir William Harcourt, then Home Secretary, introduced a Bill for the prevention of crime in Ireland.

apprehension of a wrong-doer. Lord Clarendon was induced reluctantly to express his satisfaction with these powers, chiefly on the ground that it was desirable to secure the practical unanimity of Parliament. Mr. Disraeli did not oppose the Bill, nor Mr. Hume, nor Mr. Cobden, nor Mr. Bright. Lord Stanley in the House of Lords denounced it as too weak for its purpose. Such also was the opinion of Sir Robert Peel, though he was too constitutional a statesman to press upon the Executive Government an authority for which they did not ask. But Peel, in the course of his speech, anticipating by many years a famous dictum of John Bright's, reminded the House that expedients of this kind were no remedies for social evils. Few Ministers needed this warning less than Lord John Russell, who in Irish politics went deeper and saw further than most of his colleagues. The crisis of 1847 convinced him that the Irish landlords were not entitled to a rent which left an inadequate provision for the maintenance of the tenant and the relief of the poor. 1847.

The session which began in November 1847 was interrupted by adjournment for Christmas, and was not resumed till the 3rd of February 1848. Both Lord Stanley and Lord George Bentinck made pugnacious speeches on the Address. But the only question which divided parties before Christmas was the claim of Baron Rothschild to take his seat for the City of London, and that proved fatal to the influence of Lord George Bentinck himself. A Jew was not ineligible, and the Baron had been duly elected. But every member of either House had then to take the oath of allegiance "on the true faith of a Christian," and this oath it was obvious that a Jew could not take. The Government determined to legislate for the removal of this grievance, and the Prime Jewish disabilities.

1847. Minister himself moved the preliminary resolution upon which a Bill dealing with religion must be founded. It was carried by a majority of 67, but more than ten years elapsed before the political disabilities of the Jewish race were, by a curious and characteristically English compromise, taken away. The principal speaker against the resolution was Lord Ashley, who had returned to the House with the new Parliament. United on the other side, a strange trio, were Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Disraeli, and Lord George Bentinck. Mr. Gladstone had formerly opposed the admission of the Jews to municipal offices. But as that point had been conceded, he held that it was illogical to exclude them from the Legislature. Whether the argument be sound or not, it was a singularly courageous one in the mouth of a member for the University of Oxford. By far the most interesting speech in the debate was Mr. Disraeli's. For Lord John Russell the matter was simple and easy. Civil and religious liberty might almost be called his family motto. To Mr. Disraeli the phrase was an empty formula. A Jew by birth, he professed the Christian religion, and he was a leader of the Tory revolt against Peel. He had been, or called himself, a Radical. He never was, nor called himself, a Whig. But his belief in his race was as fervent as the religious enthusiasm of any pietist in the Church to which he nominally adhered. The chapter in his *Life of Lord George Bentinck* entitled "The Jewish Question"[1] is quite the most extraordinary essay that ever found its way into a political biography. Upon an historical point of some importance Mr. Disraeli differs from Tacitus, and assigns the crucifixion of Christ to the reign of Augustus Cæsar. The reasoning is quite as original as the history, and it is impossible not to

Disraeli and the Jewish question.

[1] Chapter xxiv.

admire the sublime assurance of the statement that "no one has ever been permitted to write under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit except a Jew." Mr. Disraeli haughtily declined to rest the claims of the Jews upon the prosaic fact that they were citizens and taxpayers. He vindicated for them a peculiar position of inherent superiority to the rest of mankind, arguing that a Jew was only an undeveloped Christian, and a Christian only a developed Jew. Lamenting, with inimitable gravity, that Baron Rothschild rejected half of the true Jewish faith, which really embraced Christianity, he asked whether any one could deny that "Jesus of Nazareth, the Incarnate Son of the Most High God, was the eternal glory of the Jewish race." Mr. Disraeli's client, Baron Rothschild, would certainly have denied it, and that was the very reason why he could not take the oath prescribed by law. But whatever may be thought of Mr. Disraeli's history, his logic, or his taste, his courage at that time was splendid. It was many years before his party forgave his fidelity to the race of which he was so illustrious an ornament. 1847.

The twenty-fifth chapter of the singular book already so often quoted, opens with the following sentence: — "The views expressed in the preceding chapter were not those which influenced Lord George Bentinck in forming his opinion that the civil disabilities of those subjects of Her Majesty who profess that limited belief in divine revelation which is commonly called the Jewish religion should be removed." Most assuredly they were not. Lord George was about as capable of conceiving or comprehending them as of writing a Greek ode, or understanding a proposition in political economy. But he had been a Whig before he was a Tory, and as such had voted for the Jew Bill of Mr. Robert Grant. Personally, as his

1847. private correspondence shows, he cared little or nothing about the matter. He was an obstinate man, and perfectly fearless. His temper bordered on the irritable, and he brooked not contradiction. Although his health was impaired by his strange refusal to eat or drink while the House of Commons was sitting, he rose from his bed to speak and vote for Lord John Russell's resolution. To his more bigoted followers this gave great offence, and they addressed to him a written remonstrance. Like a man of spirit he at once resigned, and Lord Stanley, who knew too much about the turf to trust him, made no effort to retain his co-operation.

The Hampden case.

The autumn of 1847 was visited and enlivened by an ecclesiastical storm. The cause was the appointment of Dr. Hampden, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, to the Bishopric of Hereford. Dr. Hampden was an ordinary person, whose peculiar fate it was to cause two convulsions in the Church. His heresies were so minute that they required a theological microscope, and were invisible to the naked eye. When Lord Melbourne, a learned theologian and a complete free-thinker, nominated him to the Oxford Chair, he was unconscious of the stir which the nomination would make. Lord John Russell, on the contrary, knew very well what he was doing, and intended the consequences which followed. Lord John did not share Lord Melbourne's cynical indifference to religious disputes. He was a strong Protestant and a thorough-going Erastian, determined to assert the authority of the State, and dreading the encroachments of the Church of Rome. He regarded the Oxford Movement with abhorrence; the secession of Dr. Newman had alarmed him; and when he recommended Dr. Hampden to the Crown, he meant to strike a blow

at the High Church party. A number of bishops, failing, as bishops so often fail, to realise the meaning of an establishment, protested against the choice of the Minister, which had now become the choice of the Queen. The House of Commons is the only place where the Royal prerogative can be constitutionally or successfully challenged. Lord John wrote a firm and temperate reply to these episcopal remonstrants, whose own honours and emoluments were derived from the authority they impugned. To the Dean of Hereford, Dr. Merewether, who declared that he would not vote for Dr. Hampden in the Chapter, Lord John took a higher line. "I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, in which you announce your intention of violating the law," was the Prime Minister's response to the Dean, who carried out his threat, and voted against Dr. Hampden. But as the majority of the Chapter voted the other way, the penalties of *præmunire* were not incurred. The Vicar General refused to hear objections at the Bishop's confirmation in Bow Church, and an appeal was made to the Court of Queen's Bench for a mandamus to compel him. The four judges being equally divided, no rule was granted, and the case was then allowed to drop. More than half a century afterwards the King's Bench Division in similar circumstances decided that the Vicar General had no power to deal with anything short of a legal disqualification, and that therefore a mandamus would not lie. Dr. Hampden was not again molested. But the High Church party never forgave Lord John. 1847.

Lord Hardinge and Lord Dalhousie.

At the close of the year Lord Hardinge vacated his office as Governor-General of India. Though a soldier, he was a man of peace, and though compelled to fight on the Sutlej, where the British arms were completely successful, he steadily refused

1847. to annex the Punjab, agreeing with Sir Robert Peel that our empire in India was "overgrown."[1] Always anxious to conciliate the Peelites, Lord John offered this great place to Sir James Graham, who after some hesitation declined it. It was finally accepted, with momentous consequences to the Indian Empire, by another Peelite, the Earl of Dalhousie. Lord Dalhousie had come very young into public life, and his talents had already made themselves felt. But that he would be the most brilliant Governor-General since the days of Lord Wellesley nobody then foresaw.

[1] When he left India, Lord Hardinge expressed to Lord Dalhousie the opinion that it would not be necessary to fire another shot there for five years.

CHAPTER V

REVOLUTION AND REACTION

THE year 1848 opened in anxiety and gloom. 1848.
There was indeed no anticipation of the dramatic changes which actually occurred. But unrest and alarm prevailed, "distress of nations with perplexity." The commercial panic of the autumn had thrown thousands out of work; the price of bread, not yet untaxed, was unusually high, and there was a serious amount of discontent among the labouring classes of Great Britain. In Ireland Panic.
continued famine and starvation had reduced the masses of the people to a dangerous condition of mingled wrath and despair. Men had not much confidence in the Government, nor in the future, nor in each other. An unlucky accident made matters worse. Early in January there was published a letter from the Duke of Wellington to The Duke's letter to Burgoyne.
Sir John Burgoyne, then Chief Engineer, on the defences of the country. The letter was more than a year old; it was confidential; and its publication was much regretted by the Duke. It made, however, a great stir, as well it might, for it explained that, in the Duke's opinion, which no soldier durst contradict, England could be successfully invaded at a number of specified points, and that neither men nor ammunition were adequate for resistance. Mr. Cobden, in a speech at Manchester, referred in contemptuous terms to this letter, and to its

1848. illustrious author. His attack upon the Duke, who could have no conceivable motive except the good of his country, and had not allowed the letter to be published, was a serious error in taste and judgment. His protest against panic was better founded. But the Duke did not speak without book. The meagreness of the artillery was a serious source of danger. Meanwhile the Government were compelled to take the matter up. Lord John Russell wrote an elaborate memorandum in favour of immediately replenishing the arsenals, and gradually increasing the militia. He sent it to Lord Palmerston, who replied in his familiar tone of cheerful and ostentatious panic that Lord John's proposals were too weak, and that their effect would be too slow. The Budget was introduced on the 18th of February by the Prime Minister himself,[1] who stated on the authority of the Cabinet and his own that the income tax must be raised from 7d. to 1s. in the pound, and that for two years. It would then remain at 7d. for three years more, when it was to cease. This announcement, which Lord John rested mainly upon the Duke's letter, provoked an explosion of public wrath such as no other Budget has kindled since. Panic has its luxurious side. Payment is an unmitigated evil, and Lord John's speech did not gild the pill. It was almost universally regarded as injudicious, and his allusions to the military establishments of France were not happy. Louis Philippe, the least warlike of men, was a bad bugbear, and people began to ask themselves whether there was not something to be said for Cobden's view. In the House of Commons Mr. Cobden attacked the Government,

The first Budget of 1848.

[1] Sir Robert Peel had made a precedent for this in 1842, and followed it in 1845. On neither occasion was he Chancellor of the Exchequer; indeed, he only held that office in the brief Tory Government of 1834–35.

and Mr. Disraeli attacked them both. Matters were not improved when, five days later, Sir Charles Wood, who, according to Greville, was as much disgusted with his chief's speech as any one, proposed the appointment of two secret committees, one for the Army and Navy Estimates, the other for those of the Civil Service. The secrecy had to be abandoned. But the Committees were struck, and reported strongly in favour of retrenchment. "Are we all mad?" asked Joseph Hume in despair after Lord John's speech. Sanity according to Hume very soon returned, and a cold fit succeeded the hot one. The country was not in a mood to bear heavier taxation. The Duke of Wellington was honoured and respected more than any other living Englishman. But his advice was disregarded, and yet Palmerston was retained at the Foreign Office. This combination of warlike diplomacy with pacific armaments almost deserved the epithet of Hume.

1848. Feb. 23.

While the House of Commons was considering the Duke's letter, and the doubled income tax, there happened in France, the land of theatrical surprises, a sudden and unexpected event which upset the calculations of every statesman in Europe. On the 24th of February the Constitutional Monarchy, the Monarchy of July, collapsed without warning, without resistance, without a blow. It had never any true hold upon either the minds or the affections of the working classes, and because it had no root, it withered away. After seventeen years of peace and prosperity, King Louis Philippe fell with unexampled suddenness from the heights of power to the depths of impotence. He fell without dignity or credit, and without even an attempt to defend his family, his dynasty, or himself. Alexis de Tocqueville, in his merciless Reminiscences, says that the King was bewildered and stupefied by sheer amazement. His Majesty had,

The French Revolution.

Fall of Louis Philippe.

1848. says M. de Tocqueville, confided so entirely in his own kingcraft, he had got so much into the habit of putting down his own luck to his own cleverness, that when his luck failed him, he was as helpless as a child. A more honourable explanation is, however, possible. The Emperor Otho is lauded as a martyr because he committed suicide to stop the civil war between the partisans of Vitellius and his own. Louis Philippe had a sincere horror of bloodshed, and it may be that he would not have retained his crown at the expense of his subjects. At any rate the latest form of French Monarchy fell to pieces like a house of cards. On Tuesday the 22nd of February M. Odilon Barrot proposed in the Chamber the impeachment of M. Guizot's Ministry. Guizot was aware of the Republican movement in Paris, and would have resisted it if he had been supported by the King. But Louis Philippe was not indisposed to sacrifice his unpopular Minister, and Guizot was ready in the circumstances to sacrifice himself. On the 23rd he resigned, and the King sent for Count Molé. Upon M. Molé's failure to form a Government, the task, the impossible task as it turned out, was entrusted to M. Thiers and M. Barrot. At a later period of his life M. Thiers rendered priceless services to his country, and became by general consent the chief magistrate of France. But in 1848 he did not distinguish himself, and so far from riding the whirlwind, he was swept away by the storm. The flood of democracy, swelled by discontent and poverty, carried everything before it. On the 24th of February, no Government having been formed, a number of Republicans, headed by Emile de Girardin, invaded the Tuileries, and demanded the abdication of the King. He abdicated at once in favour of his grandson, the Comte de Paris, for whom the Comte's mother, the

Duchesse d'Orléans, was to be Regent. The mother and son were conducted to the Palais Bourbon. Some of the deputies cheered them loudly; Lamartine made an eloquent speech on their behalf; and it was the opinion of de Tocqueville that, if the Duchesse had risen to the occasion, the Monarchy might have been saved. However this may have been, the critical moment was allowed to slip, and the Republic was proclaimed at the Hôtel de Ville. The King and his family escaped to England by way of Honfleur and Havre. He landed at Newhaven under the name of Smith, and wrote to Queen Victoria, in token of his fall, as the Comte de Neuilly. Since the first Lord Shaftesbury took refuge in Holland, for which he had proclaimed the fate of Carthage, there had scarcely been a more incongruous choice of exile. But though the memory of the Spanish marriages was fresh in the minds of Englishmen, they showed, with one conspicuous exception, no resentment. The Queen, forgetting everything except the misfortunes of the royal pair, received them with the utmost kindness, and they took up their abode at Claremont, which belonged to the King of the Belgians. Lord Palmerston alone was implacable, and the misfortunes of his enemy did not soften his heart. He did all he could to turn Louis Philippe out of the country. But he was unsuccessful, and the brief remainder of the discrowned King's days were spent at Claremont. M. Guizot also fled from Paris in disguise, and also crossed the Channel. He too took up his residence in England, where he had many friends, from Sir Robert Peel downwards. His religion was austerely Protestant, and few Englishmen were better acquainted either with the situation or with the politics of this country. No form of exile could have been more congenial to him, and in London his welcome was as cordial as

1848.

The refugees in England.

1848. if there had been no royal marriages in Madrid. Guizot was largely responsible for his master's failure. His government had indeed been mild and humane. "I knew enough of its vices," says de Tocqueville, "to be aware that cruelty was not one of them." But corruption was, and although Guizot was personally pure, he connived at the misdeeds of others. *À nettoyer deux chambres, et une couronne* was a placard seen more than once in Paris during the later months of 1847. It might have been thought that the French Revolution would have revived the financial panic in England. Its effect, however, was precisely the reverse. Feb. 26. When the news reached the House of Commons, Cobden said to Hume, "Go and tell Sir Robert Peel." Peel was sitting, as he was wont to sit, silent and aloof. When Hume had given his message, Peel replied, "This is what would have happened here if these gentlemen," pointing to the Protectionists, "had had their way." If Peel's words look like an exaggeration now, we must remember that the Crown was only then beginning to become once more popular, and that Peel's opinion was also the opinion of M. Guizot, a Conservative, a champion of the landed interest, and of all Frenchmen the one who knew England best.

The vacillation of the Whig Government was proof against the most tremendous convulsions of the political world. Sir Charles Wood was the reverse of Brutus.[1] It was of little consequence what he meant. For he did not mean it much, or long. On the 28th of February, ten days after his The second Budget of 1848. first Budget, when Europe was rocking like a ship in a storm, he calmly abandoned the proposed increase of the income tax, an increase of nearly a hundred per cent, which the Prime Minister had just pronounced essential to the stability of the

[1] Magni refert hic quid velit. Sed quidquid volet, valde volet.

financial equilibrium. This left him with a handsome deficit of more than three millions, which he borrowed without a blush in time of peace. Even then Sir Robert Peel did not desert his clients. But he took the opportunity of defending first the income tax, and secondly Free Trade.[1] There is force in Mr. Disraeli's sarcastic comment. "In the midst of general convulsion, with four pitched battles fought in Europe in eight weeks, and the Adriatic and the Baltic both blockaded, the Government discovered that without the increased tax our armaments were sufficiently strong and our means of defence adequate."[2] The plain truth is that if Ministers had persevered with a shilling income tax, for which there was much to be said, they would have been beaten, and they knew it. What they perhaps did not know was that Peel would have overcome his reluctance to take office again rather than let a Protectionist Ministry in. To Peel's defence of the income tax Cobden replied that it was unjust to precarious, or professional, as compared with permanent incomes. This is an argument which, plausible as it seems, no Chancellor of the Exchequer has ever admitted. The official answer always repeats that the tax is as precarious as the income, and the income as permanent as the tax. 1848.

The great events of 1848 did not happen in England, nor were the English people directly concerned in them. But the unity of Europe is such that they cannot be passed over here, and a brief outline of the facts is necessary to any one who would understand the foreign policy of England. On the 3rd of March a provisional Government The Second Republic.

[1] Sir Spencer Walpole is not less loyal. Like a good biographer, he pleads the disturbed state of the Continent as a justification for Lord John's change of front.

[2] *Life of Lord George Bentinck*, pp. 551–552.

1848. Lamartine.

was formed at Paris. The nominal chief of it was the aged M. Dupont, but its real head was Lamartine, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. At this time the ascendency of Lamartine was unbounded. He was for the moment the idol of Paris, and he mistook Paris for France. His undaunted courage and his captivating eloquence made him irresistible. As Foreign Minister he issued a flowery manifesto to the diplomatic agents of France abroad, assuring them, and assuring Europe, that, unlike the Republic of 1792, the Republic of 1848 meant peace. At the same time he laid down the principle that the territorial arrangements fixed by the Treaty of Vienna could not be regarded as permanent, and vindicated the rights of Italian nationality. In this respect Lamartine was before his time, and he had the sympathies of Lord Palmerston. The national workshops, on the other hand, established at the suggestion of Louis Blanc and George Sand, were the subject of much ridicule in England, though, as Cobden remarked a year afterwards, the workhouses were our *ateliers nationaux*. There was much dislike of England at that time in France, and employers of labour found it necessary to dismiss their English workmen, some of whom arrived home in a state of destitution. On the 23rd and 24th of April were held the elections for the National Assembly. At the head of the poll for the department of the Seine was Lamartine. At the bottom was Lamennais, the Liberal Catholic, a man of more theological than political distinction. M. Thiers was defeated in the Bouches du Rhône. No less than four constituencies elected Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, who was then, and had long been, a fugitive in England.

Return of Louis Napoleon.

He was permitted to return, and to take his seat. But he could not speak, and as a deputy he was a failure. He had other designs, in which fluency

was not required, and his hesitation in the tribune did him no harm. As Tacitus says of Domitian, "ignotis adhuc moribus, crebra oris confusio pro modestia accipiebatur,"[1] since his character was not yet known, his frequent confusion of face was taken for modesty. The Assembly met on the 4th of May, and at once declared the Republic to be the established form of Government in France. A Committee was appointed to draw up a Constitution, which decided in favour of a single Chamber, and a President elected by universal suffrage. Meanwhile, on the 15th of May, a mob broke into the Chamber of Deputies, and after a tumultuous scene was expelled by the National Guard. The Fête de Concorde on Sunday the 21st did not belie its name. But in June the streets of Paris were desolated by civil strife, and on Sunday the 25th the Archbishop of Paris was shot from a barricade while attempting to act as mediator between the parties. On the 28th General Cavaignac was chosen by the Assembly to be President of the Council, and he at once suppressed the national workshops. He was an honest man, and by conviction a Republican. But his term of office was brief. Although in the Chamber he had no rival, in the country the name of Napoleon carried everything before it, and on the 10th of December Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was elected President of the Republic by 5,434,226 votes against 1,448,107 cast for Cavaignac, the choice of the National Assembly. On the 20th of December the new President took an oath that he would observe the Constitution, and appointed Odilon Barrot to be his Prime Minister. The French people, said Thiers, made two great mistakes about Louis Napoleon. The first was when they took him for a fool. The second was when they took him for a man of genius. They

1848.

The barricades.

Cavaignac.

Louis Napoleon elected President.

[1] *Hist.* iv. 40.

1848. accepted him lightly on account of his name. It was twenty-two years before they got rid of him, and France herself nearly perished in the process.

The Continental Revolution. But it was not only in France that the revolutionary storm broke out. In Berlin the soldiers fired on the people, and the Prince of Prussia, afterwards German Emperor, sought the hospitality of Great Britain, while his brother, the King, eager to do something constitutional, called a National Assembly. In Austria things went much further. On the 15th of March Prince Metternich, that veteran obstructive of reform, fled in haste from Vienna, never to return. The Hungarians rose in revolt, and proclaimed Louis Kossuth their Dictator. The imbecile Emperor Ferdinand was obliged to abdicate, and was succeeded by his nephew, Francis Joseph, then a very young man, but a man of intelligence and character. The Hungarian rebellion deserved success, was for a time completely successful, and would have succeeded altogether if Austria had been left to cope with it alone. But many Poles took part in it; the most successful of the Hungarian Generals, Bem, was a Pole, and this gave Russia an excuse, or at least a pretext, for interfering. At first the rebels were everywhere victorious, and Hungary was rapidly slipping away from the grasp of Austria. But on the 27th of April 1849 there came out a manifesto from Count Nesselrode, the Russian Chancellor, explaining that his august master, the Emperor Nicholas, was unable to acquiesce in disturbances so near his own borders. The Emperor Nicholas had no right whatever to intervene. But intervene he did, and from that moment the tide turned. The gallant Hungarians could not stand against the armies of Russia, and on the 13th of August

Abdication of the Emperor Ferdinand.

Interference of Nicholas in Hungary.

their General, Görgey, surrendered to the Russian forces with thirty thousand men. Marshal Haynau, a man justly odious for his barbarous cruelty, received, on the 1st of October 1849, the great Hungarian fortress of Komorn from General Klapka, and the rebellion was at an end. Kossuth and the other rebels fled to Widdin, in Turkish territory, and the Sultan, Abdul Medjid, did himself honour by refusing to give them up. Nicholas was furious. But the Turk, a better Christian on this occasion than the Czar, being supported by England and France, refused to give way, and Kossuth was one of the very few rebels who have died of old age. This defiance of European and civilised opinion, to say nothing of justice and humanity, by the autocrat of all the Russias, had very serious consequences in the not distant future. It was the sort of thing that Lord Palmerston, as a friend of popular movements, could not stand, and it also aroused the righteous indignation of the English people.

1849.

The Sultan's refusal to give up the Hungarian refugees.

Nowhere did the storm of 1848 rage with more severity than in Italy. The Italian Peninsula was subject to the double influence of the French revolution and the Austrian revolt. In the month of March the Milanese rose, and drove out Marshal Radetzky, the Austrian Governor. In the same month a Provisional Government was formed in Venice, and a Republic was proclaimed, after an interval of fifty years, under Daniele Manin. A few days afterwards, Charles Albert, the King of Sardinia, took Peschiera from the Austrians. In the Papal States the movement was active, and on the 1st of May the Pope, who still posed as a Liberal, was driven to declare war against Austria. He set up a Liberal Government, but on the 15th of November his Minister, Count Rossi, was murdered, and he himself withdrew in a panic

1848.

The revolt of Italy.

The Revival of the Venetian Republic.

1848. Flight of the Pope.

from Rome to Gaeta. Meanwhile the Sicilians had taken up arms against Ferdinand the Second, afterwards infamous as "King Bomba," a cruel and superstitious bigot. The King, under pressure, granted the Sicilians a Constitution, the Constitution of 1812, which was based on a document of the fourteenth century, not unlike our Magna Charta. In spite of this propitiatory measure the Sicilian Parliament elected as King of Sicily the Duke of Genoa, younger son of Charles Albert, but he declined the honour. The revolution, however, was premature, and Messina was reduced to submission by Ferdinand with such atrocious barbarism that the English and French Admirals on the station felt bound to interfere on behalf of common humanity.

Reduction of Sicily.

1849.

The hopes of Italian freedom and independence which had been raised in 1848 were blighted in 1849. On the 24th of March in that year, the veteran Marshal Radetzky, perhaps the oldest general who ever won a battle, defeated the Piedmontese army at Novara, and Charles Albert abdicated in favour of his son, Victor Emmanuel, the future liberator of Italy. A month later Palermo surrendered to General Filangieri, and the Sicilian insurrection was at an end. On the 3rd of July General Oudinot, who had been sent on an expedition to Civita Vecchia, entered Rome, and the Roman Republic, Mazzini's Republic, was suppressed by the troops of Republican France. Venice was retaken by Austria on the 28th of August, and Manin fled from Italy. After Novara Palmerston did what he could to secure lenient terms for the Italians, and to reduce the amount of the indemnity claimed by Austria. There can be little doubt that if England had stood aloof France would have intervened alone, and a European war would have ensued. The most serious and formal

Defeat of Charles Albert at Novara.

The French occupation of Rome.

Recapture of Venice.

Palmerston's support of Italy.

assault upon Palmerston's Italian policy was made in the House of Lords on the 20th of July 1849, by Lord Brougham, who moved a number of resolutions condemning the Government, first, because they had supported Italy against Austria, and, secondly, because they had favoured Sicily against the King of Naples. Lord Brougham made a very long, and a very discursive speech. But his extravagant egoism, and generally erratic behaviour, had destroyed his influence, leaving him, in Macaulay's words, a dead nettle. Lord Stanley and Lord Aberdeen were more dangerous antagonists. But Lord Stanley, though the most brilliant debater in Parliament, wanted ballast, and it was often difficult to see what he would be at. Lord Aberdeen, on the other hand, was a man of high character and strong principle. He was the exact opposite of Lord Palmerston. At home a zealous and even advanced reformer, he adhered to the foreign policy of Castlereagh and Metternich. The Treaty of Vienna was his diplomatic bible, and he did not acknowledge that Italy had a right to exist. He thought that the King of Sardinia was a wanton aggressor for invading Lombardy, and that nationality had nothing to do with the matter. What was the King of Sardinia's title to Genoa? The same Treaty of Vienna which he violated in attacking Lombardy. And so on, and so forth. Lord Brougham exhausted the language of vituperation in speaking of Italian Liberals, and Lord Stanley described the independence of Italy as an idle dream. Lord Lansdowne, Lord Minto, and Lord Carlisle were not equal to the three Leaders of the Opposition. But they managed by dint of proxies to secure a majority of 12 votes. In the House of Commons Palmerston had it all his own way, and nothing made him more popular there than his successful support of the Hungarian

1849.

Lord Palmerston and Lord Aberdeen.

1849. refugees, who escaped the vengeance of Austria and Russia. Bem, the Polish General of Hungarian troops, settled in Turkey, and adopted the Mohammedan faith. Kossuth, the Hungarian chief, after enjoying, or enduring, the protection of the Sultan for two years, came to England, and made some stir there, as we shall see. Palmerston was almost as strongly Hungarian as he was Italian.

July 21. "Opinions," he said in the House of Commons, after the Hungarians had been crushed by the forces of the Czar, "opinions are stronger than armies." Pascal had said much the same thing before him. But neither Bright nor Cobden could have expressed more strongly a truth which Napoleon discovered to his cost, and Carlyle was never able to understand. Scarcely any one knew

His hatred of Austria. at the time how vehement was Palmerston's hatred of Austria, or at least how vehemently he expressed it in his private correspondence. Mr. Evelyn Ashley has printed some of the letters which, as Sir Spencer Walpole tells us in his *Life of Lord John Russell*, almost drove Lord Ponsonby, the British Ambassador at Vienna, into resignation. "My dear Ponsonby," he wrote on the 9th of September 1849, "the Austrians are really the greatest brutes that ever called themselves undeservedly by the name of civilised men."[1] Three weeks later he wrote to Lord Normanby at Paris, and, after expressing his own views, which ultimately prevailed, added, with engaging candour, "But all this is only my own personal opinion, and I cannot answer for the Broad Brims of the Cabinet." Lord Ponsonby had strong Austrian sympathies, and Lord Palmerston admonished him on the subject. "I write you this," he says on the 27th of November 1849, "and desire you to do your best, though I hear from many quarters that you

[1] Ashley's *Life of Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 139.

oppose instead of furthering the policy of your Government, and that you openly declare that you disapprove of our course. No diplomatist ought to hold such language as long as he holds his appointment." It is extraordinary that Lord Ponsonby did not resign. Throughout this affair Palmerston was acting with France. But the French occupation of Rome he pronounced in Parliament to be "unfortunate." It ill became a Republican Government, in which M. de Tocqueville was Foreign Minister, to suppress a Republic on the other side of the Alps. Mazzini and Garibaldi were, at least, as worthy of respect as Lamartine and Ledru Rollin. That Austria would have moved if France had not is uncertain and immaterial. Austria had enough of Italy on her hands, and Austria was not a Republic. Lord Palmerston's view was that the Pope should not be allowed to re-enter Rome until he had promised to govern in a constitutional fashion. But a constitutional Pope is almost as unthinkable as a constitutional God. 1849.

It is said that Lord Palmerston, being asked in 1849 the difference between business and occupation, replied that the French were in occupation of Rome, but they had no business to be there. Business or no business, they remained there for nearly twenty years. Even Lord Palmerston did not attempt to interfere with the French Revolution. He had no particular love for the Republic, and he did not believe in its stability. But he hated the Orleanists, especially Louis Philippe, whom he saw, with ill-concealed and rather brutal satisfaction, reduced to drinking bad water and sour beer at Claremont, instead of claret and champagne at the Tuileries. Just before the fall of "the popular king," who was liked without being respected, the British Government introduced

1848. a measure for enabling themselves to interfere with more effect in European politics. On the 17th of February 1848, nine months earlier than the flight of the Pope, Lord Lansdowne moved in the House of Lords the second reading of a Bill for authorising diplomatic relations with the Court of Rome. This was really Palmerston's Bill, and, indeed, the whole of his foreign policy was played, as he himself put it, off his own bat. The Bill was the direct result of Lord Minto's singular mission to Italy in 1847, and on principle it was difficult to oppose. The Pope was a temporal sovereign, and five-sixths of the Irish people owned him as their spiritual head. Some lawyers thought that the Queen might, without statutory authority, appoint an envoy to Rome, and receive an ambassador from the Pope. But the balance of opinion was the other way, and it was considered safer to proceed by legislation. The principle of the measure was supported by Lord Stanley, the Duke of Wellington, and Bishop Thirlwall. Its only prominent antagonist was Bishop Philpotts of Exeter, a militant churchman of the fiercest type, who inspired awe without inspiring esteem. No worse charge was ever made against "Harry of Exeter" than that he had supported Catholic Emancipation to get a bishopric from the Duke. But in controversy he did not always display a Christian temper, and he seemed to be rather orthodox than pious. Bishop Thirlwall's philosophic intellect almost always took a statesman-like view of political questions, and Lord Stanley, having been Chief Secretary for Ireland, knew the value of a good understanding with the Vatican. Although the Bill was read a second time by the Peers without a division, a curious mishap befel it in Committee, which ultimately rendered it useless for all practical purposes. Lord Eglinton, whose name is known in fields more attractive than

Palmerston and the Court of Rome.

politics,[1] carried, by a majority of 3 votes, an amendment providing that the Papal representative at the Court of St. James should not be a priest. The Bill was read a second time in the House of Commons on the 17th by a majority of 79, and Mr. Gladstone spoke in support of it. But the Pope declined to send a layman to represent him, and it became a dead letter. Mr. Disraeli, who was perhaps the best Leader of Opposition that the House of Commons has ever seen, took the opportunity of commenting upon Lord Minto's roving errand "to teach politics to the country in which Machiavelli was born." 1848.

Lord Palmerston made one use of the French Revolution which would probably not have occurred to any one else. That it was caused by corruption and misgovernment there can be little doubt. Louis Philippe was as much opposed to political reform in France as Palmerston himself was opposed to it in England, and Guizot supported him in his opposition. To Mr. Disraeli the origin of the movement which upset the French Monarchy was plain enough. He put it all down to the secret societies. He was always much impressed with the power of these bodies, which he afterwards described, with almost tedious minuteness, in *Lothair*. "The two characteristics of these confederations," he says in his *Life of Lord George Bentinck*, "which now cover Europe like a network, are war against property and hatred of the Semitic revelation."[2] "It is," he says again, "the manœuvres of these men, who are striking at property and Christ, which the good people of this country, who are so accumulative and so religious, Palmerston's intervention in Spain.

[1] He was the master of the ceremonies at the Eglinton Tournament in 1837, when Sheridan's grand-daughter, Lady Seymour, afterwards Duchess of Somerset, won the prize for beauty.

[2] Page 553.

1848. recognise and applaud as the progress of the Liberal cause."[1] The men of February were not irreligious — quite the contrary. They carried a crucifix bare-headed in procession through the streets, exclaiming, "He is the Master of us all!" Monseigneur d'Afre, the Archbishop of Paris, was accidentally, not intentionally, shot. But Mr. Disraeli did not over-estimate the influence of the secret societies. Louis Napoleon belonged to one of them, the Carbonari, and this fact had much to do with his Italian policy in later years. Lord Palmerston, however, stuck to his point, and insisted that revolution in France was the consequence of neglecting reform. He quoted Canning's remark that those who rejected improvement because it was innovation would have to accept innovation when it was no longer improvement. He pointed the moral at Spain, and directed
March 16. Mr. Bulwer, the British Minister at Madrid, to bring it under the notice of the Spanish Government. In his despatch he advised the Queen of Spain to take warning by the French King, to adopt constitutional methods, and to take some Liberal statesmen into her councils. The advice was excellent. But Lord Palmerston's right to give it could hardly be reconciled with any known principles of international law. Spain was not disturbed, and a sort of Constitution was nominally in force. The Queen, though legally married, was a mere child, and not a particularly well behaved one. Her relations with Marshal Serrano were the talk of Europe. Her mother, Queen Christina, had recently announced to an astonished and unedified public that she had been the wife of one Munoz for fifteen years, having married him three months after the death of her first husband. Palmerston's despatch excited intense indignation

[1] Page 554.

among all classes, and the Foreign Minister, the Duke of Sotomayor, took the unprecedented step of returning it to Mr. Bulwer. The Duke of Sotomayor's reply was very much to the point. He invited Palmerston's attention to the state of Ireland, and suggested that the British Cabinet would be strengthened by the addition of Sir Robert Peel. A few days afterwards Mr. Bulwer was requested by the Spanish Government to leave Madrid, whereupon the Spanish Minister, Senor Isturitz, was expelled from London. No further step was taken to obtain redress, but Mr. Bulwer was made a Knight Commander of the Bath, and appointed British Minister at Washington.

1848.

Indignation of the Spanish Government.

An Opposition would have been more or less than human if it had not made the most of such a case as that, and in both Houses the Government was severely handled. Palmerston had acted without the knowledge of the Cabinet, and Lord Lansdowne, who had to defend him, knew nothing, except what he read in the newspapers. Lord Grey wrote to the Prime Minister that he would not say a word for conduct of which he thoroughly disapproved. "Lord Lansdowne," says Greville, "was in a state of great indignation and disgust; he told the Duke of Bedford he had never in all his life been placed in such a situation. . . . He had never read the despatches, and had not a notion how far Palmerston had committed himself in approval of Bulwer. He said he had been to Lord John, and told him this must never happen again."[1] In the House of Commons a vote of censure was moved by Mr. Bankes, and Mr. Disraeli dilated on the "pernicious system of Liberalism." But Palmerston was saved by the violent behaviour of the Spanish Government. Many members who would otherwise have voted for the motion were deterred by

Palmerston and his colleagues.

Lord John's brother.

[1] "Greville Memoirs," 13th May 1843.

1848. fear of seeming to show sympathy with the expulsion of a British Minister by a foreign power. If the attitude of Spain had been more diplomatically correct, the Government would probably have been defeated, or Palmerston would have had to resign. Palmerston, to do him justice, never threw over a subordinate, but on this occasion he did go so far as to say that Sir Henry Bulwer had not been instructed to communicate the actual despatch. As, however, he had clearly been directed to tell the Spanish Government what was in it, the distinction was more technical than substantial. Sir Robert Peel, though he declined to vote for the motion, expressed disapproval of Palmerston's tone, but admitted, oddly enough, that we had the right to advise Spain on her internal affairs. He derived the right from the Peninsular War, which was more profitable to the Spanish dynasty than to the Spanish people.

Palmerston's Italian sympathies.

Palmerston's foreign policy was subject to constant attacks in Parliament. These onslaughts were less formidable in his own House than in the other. Mr. Disraeli, though his speeches are almost always interesting to read, because they are out of the ordinary run, was in those days apt, especially in foreign politics, to alienate his own side without attracting his opponents. But in the House of Lords, Lord Stanley, Lord Aberdeen, and Lord Brougham were a powerful combination. Agreeing in little else, they were animated by a common hatred of Italy and a common love of Austria. Their language about the King of Sardinia was violent in the extreme, and in the circumstances most unjust. Charles Albert was not a strong man, and he went to war without counting the cost. But in attempting to drive the Austrians out of Lombardy he consulted the wishes of his subjects, and the claims of nationality

to recognition. Lord Palmerston was frankly and unreservedly Italian. He made no secret of his belief that the Austrians were intruders not only in Lombardy but also in Venetia. They were aliens in race and language. It would be far better for them to retire behind the Alps, their natural boundary. In a striking and forcible image he said that her Italian dominions were to Austria not the shield of Ajax, but the heel of Achilles. He was, as usual, too sanguine. But his policy was founded upon prescience, and has been vindicated by time. He did not live to see the full triumph of his principles. Yet not for one instant did he waver in his wise and courageous support of Italy for the Italians. Lord John Russell was heartily with him on the main point, though as Prime Minister he found the Foreign Secretary's independence rather trying, and the Queen pronounced it to be insupportable. There was, for instance, the case of the Sicilian arms, supplied to the insurgents in Sicily during the month of September 1848 by a Government contractor named Hood. Hood told the Sicilians that he had no arms ready, the Government having taken them all, but that if the Ordnance Department would let him have some of them back he would send them to Sicily, and replenish the official stores in a short time. This was done with the sanction of Lord Palmerston, and without the knowledge of the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, or the Queen. No injury was done to the public service. But a clear breach of international law had been committed, and Palmerston, under compulsion, apologised to the King. It will be seen that he was not long in taking his revenge.

1848.

His supply of arms to the Italian insurgents.

Both England and France intervened actively during the progress of these abortive Italian revolutions. The British and French Admirals, Sir

1848-49. Anglo-French mediation.

William Parker and Admiral Baudin, interposed to stop the horrible carnage committed by the Neapolitan troops at Messina. In the north of Italy the Western Powers offered their mediation between the Emperor of Austria and the King of Sardinia, or rather, they agreed to give it at the request of Austria after the successes of the Piedmontese troops in 1848. An armistice was promised, and Austria was then prepared to cede Lombardy. But Charles Albert and his advisers, flushed with victory, asked for Venetia too, of which Austria would not hear. The mediation was therefore fruitless.

The European restoration.

By the end of 1849 the European reaction was almost complete. France, indeed, was still a Republic, but a Republic with a Bonaparte at its head, and a Bonaparte who was always changing his Ministers. Louis Philippe, Guizot, and Metternich had disappeared from public life, and were living in exile. But Hungary was crushed, Vienna was quiet, and the young Emperor was firmly seated on his throne. Italy was once more a geographical expression. Vienna and Milan were again under the heel of Austria. The Grand Duke of Tuscany and the Duke of Parma had been restored by Austrian arms. The King of Naples was again King of the Two Sicilies. The young King of Sardinia was restricted to Piedmont and Genoa. Although Pius the Ninth was still at Gaeta, the Roman Republic, like the Venetian, had passed away. Order reigned in Berlin, and Frederick William in Prussia. The King of Prussia had been offered, and had refused, the Imperial Crown of Germany. He refused it ostensibly because the offer came from a national assembly of Germans, and not from the German Princes, of whom he was himself one. His real reason was fear of Austria, and Prince Albert was

much disgusted with His Majesty's prudence or pusillanimity. The Prince was as far-sighted in German affairs as Lord Palmerston was in Italian. He was an ardent believer in German unity under the guidance and supremacy of Prussia. He stood almost alone then, and little progress was made towards his ideal before his death. But it seems so obvious now that we are inclined to underrate the sagacity of those who supported it in the dark days of 1849. 1849.

CHAPTER VI

ENGLISH CHARTISTS AND IRISH REBELS

1848.

The first French Revolution, the Revolution of 1789, postponed reform in England for more than forty years. The second, the Revolution of 1830, contributed to the fall of the Duke's Government, and the passage of the great Reform Bill. The third, the Revolution of 1848, led to nothing better or worse than the mass meeting on Kennington Common, and the tussle in the cabbage garden at Ballingarry. The proposed meeting at Kennington, which was actually held on the 10th of April 1848, had excited real and not altogether groundless alarm. Mr. Feargus O'Connor, the Irish member for Nottingham, and editor of the *Northern Star*, the recognised organ of the Chartists, boasted that it would consist of two hundred thousand persons, that it would cross the river by three bridges, and that it would march in force on the House of Commons to present a petition in favour of the Charter. The six points of the Charter were perfectly legitimate, and two of them have long since become law. They were annual parliaments, universal suffrage, vote by ballot, equal electoral districts, the removal of the property qualification for the House of Commons, and the payment of members. But to overawe the House of Commons by a display of numbers was clearly illegal, being

The Chartist rising.

The six points.

an example of mob law, which, like martial law, is no law at all. The Government, in concert with the Duke of Wellington as Commander-in-Chief, took measures to prevent any interference with the freedom of the Legislature. "Troops were brought up to London, and arrangements were made for quietly posting them so as to command the approaches to the House of Commons. Multitudes of special constables were sworn in. Their entire number reached one hundred and seventy thousand. The Chartists were reminded that they were not the English people. The forces of order were marshalled against those of disorder. The Government appealed to the people to maintain quietness, and the people readily answered the call."[1] To praise the Duke of Wellington for not being put out by the Chartists would be mere impertinence. The whole thing was to him child's play, and as a matter of fact the soldiers never even appeared. But this 10th of April was the climax of the Home Secretary's career, and he deserved all the credit he received. He did his utmost to assert the supremacy of the law without shedding a drop of blood, and he completely succeeded in both respects. On Thursday, the 6th of April, he gave fair notice to the Chartists by a proclamation declaring that the proposed meeting would be illegal, because it would cause terror and alarm. No proclamation by an English Minister, unless it be expressly authorised by statute, can make that illegal which would otherwise have been legal. But in this case there can be no doubt that the law officers of the Crown, Sir John Jervis and Sir John Romilly, had given the Home Secretary sound advice. The meeting was illegal for the reasons stated. It

1848.

The Duke's preparations.

Sir George Grey's promptitude.

[1] Bishop Creighton's *Life of Sir George Grey*, pp. 73–74.

1848.

Kennington Common.

proved an utter, and even a ludicrous failure. The numbers attending it did not exceed twenty thousand, or one-tenth of what had been announced. Feargus O'Connor had one fatal disqualification for a leader of revolt: he was afraid of the police. When Mr. Mayne, the Commissioner, told him that the procession would not be allowed to cross the river, the truculent agitator thanked the representative of the law with effusive civility, and advised the crowd to disperse. They accordingly broke up, and were further disintegrated by policemen at the bridges. The whole affair ended in smoke, and not in the smoke which at that time accompanied the discharge of powder. The conduct of the Government was, in every way, satisfactory. But the Chartist rising was put down by the people of London. Among them, oddly enough, was Prince Louis Napoleon, who enrolled himself as a special constable for the preservation, in a foreign country, of the law that he was so signally to violate in his own.

The Chartist petition.

The petition was brought to the House of Commons in five cabs, and presented by Mr. O'Connor in the ordinary way. It was investigated by the Committee on Public Petitions, and turned out to be, in plain English, a fraud. Mr. O'Connor described it as having been signed by five millions of people. The actual number of signatures proved to be two millions. But many of these were duplicates; many more were in the same handwriting; some were obviously fictitious; while a few wags had amused themselves by writing the names of the Queen, Prince Albert, the Duke of Wellington, and Sir Robert Peel. Chartism never recovered from the contempt excited by this pitiful exposure. It had lasted just ten years. Founded in 1838, it had been in the dark days of the late thirties and early forties

a real and dangerous power. Its most formidable rival, and most fatal enemy, was the Anti-Corn Law League. By calling attention to the needs of the poor, it had enlisted the support of philanthropists like Charles Kingsley, who signed the petition, and it had attracted the not altogether unsympathetic notice of Thomas Carlyle. But even so far back as 1839 it had been connected with mere rioting, and it had never cut itself adrift from crime. Some Chartists, such as Thomas Cooper, author of the *Purgatory of Suicides*, and Ernest Jones, a justly respected member of the Bar, were punished with undue and unwarrantable severity. Others, such as John Frost, seem to have deserved their fate. In the hands of a man like Feargus O'Connor, who was even then more than half insane, any movement was bound to fail, and Richard Cobden, the most practical statesman who ever refused office, regarded it with unmitigated scorn. Joseph Hume continued courageously to urge the principles of the Charter upon a reluctant House of Commons, but he was flogging a dead horse. The Charter had been killed by its friends, and Hume found more useful employment in criticising the growth of the estimates. Neither he nor Cobden nor Bright were men to be deterred by the escapades of fanatics from urging the necessity for the enfranchisement of the working classes, who received no direct benefit from the Reform Act of 1832. But the Prime Minister was still "Finality John," and they met with no encouragement from the Treasury Bench. There were Chartist demonstrations in various parts of London throughout the summer of 1848, and in some manufacturing towns, such as Leeds, the distress of the poorer classes was extreme. There were symptoms of uneasiness and discontent which might well make statesmen reflect upon their duties 1848.

1848. and responsibilities. But, except in Ireland, there was no danger of civil war.

April 10. The Treason Felony Act.

On the very day of the collapse at Kennington, the Home Secretary moved the second reading of the Crown and Government Security Bill, now usually known as the Treason Felony Act. The object of this measure was three-fold. First, it extended to Ireland the Treason Act of George the Third. Secondly, it created the new offence of treason felony, punishable not with death, but transportation, under which most State trials have since been conducted. Thirdly, it made "open and advised speaking" with a seditious intent a crime, even though no overt action followed. To this part of the Bill the Radicals strongly objected, pointing out the restrictions which it placed upon freedom of speech, and it was enacted for two years only. They were joined in their opposition by Mr. Page Wood, afterwards Lord Chancellor Hatherley, whose political liberalism, like his religious orthodoxy, scarcely ever wavered throughout a long life. On this 10th of April Mr. Smith O'Brien, member for Limerick, made his last appearance in the House of Commons. He opposed the Bill as an Irish patriot. "I have," he said, "been called a traitor. I do not profess disloyalty to the Queen of England. But if it is disloyalty to profess treason to this House, and to the government of Ireland by the Parliament of Great Britain, then I avow the treason." The speech was a foolish one, and to answer it was easy. But not every one could have answered it as Sir George Grey did. Lord Eversley, the Speaker of that day, describes the scene — "I well remember Sir George Grey's tall dignified figure standing on the floor of the House, and the firm and dignified manner of his denunciation. The House was electrified by his speech and manner, and he sat

down in the midst of the applause which greeted him from all parts of the House, and which I never remember equalled on any other occasion."[1] Sir George Grey was not a man of brilliant parts, or of original mind. He was a type of the Whig country gentleman, tempered by Downing Street, which has seldom been a fertile combination. But he was a very favourable type, and was often shown to foreigners as the ideal member of Parliament. The Bill passed with little opposition, except to the clause about "advised speaking," and was supported with something like enthusiasm by Peel, who with unusual irrelevancy, but very great power, held up as a warning to Englishmen the evils of State Socialism in France. 1848.

Smith O'Brien was a much more respectable man than Feargus O'Connor, but he had very little more brains. He belonged to one of the most ancient families in Ireland, and his followers called him King of Munster. After his arrest an Irish constable deposed that he could not fire on a descendant of Irish royalty. He was a Protestant in religion, like John Mitchel, and had been gradually converted from Toryism to repeal. His family did not share his politics, being staunch supporters of the Union. Smith O'Brien had already met with a severe rebuff from Lamartine, to whom, as the virtual head of the French Government, he had appealed at Paris for aid in his struggle with England. Lamartine replied that France was, and desired to remain, at peace with the whole of the United Kingdom, and not merely with a part of it. On the 15th of May he was put upon his trial for sedition, but the jury were unable to agree. On the same occasion, John Mitchel, a far abler man, was convicted, sentenced to fourteen years' transportation, and at once Smith O'Brien.

John Mitchel.

[1] Creighton's *Life of Sir George Grey*, pp. 78–79.

1848. shipped to Bermuda, from which he was taken to Australia. There he was released on parole, but nevertheless escaped to the United States, and fought for slavery. Finally he returned to Ireland, and was elected for an Irish constituency, but not allowed to take his seat. He was a polished writer, and forcible speaker, who understood the Irish Land Question far better than the English Government. But he made himself impossible. In his paper, absurdly called *The United Irishman*, he challenged the Lord Lieutenant, declared that one of them must put the other down, preached civil war, and even proposed the use of vitriol. He had no power whatever of carrying out his threats, and perhaps the Lord Lieutenant might safely have left him alone. But Lord Clarendon was not the man to refuse a challenge. He did not want to be put down himself, and so he put down John Mitchel. Smith O'Brien, after his first trial, raised a few followers who came into collision with some fifty policemen, and after a show of resistance took to their heels. He himself was arrested at Thurles, and was brought before a Special Commission at Clonmel, over which Lord Chief Justice Blackburne presided, on a charge of high treason. He was convicted on the 7th of October, and sentenced, in the barbarous formula of those days, to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. The sentence was, after a writ of error had been refused, commuted by the Home Secretary to transportation for life. But the convict raised another legal objection. He disputed the right of the Crown to alter the judgment of the law. He must, so he argued, be set at liberty if the Government did not choose to hang, draw, and quarter him, as the law prescribed. To settle this novel point a special Act was passed, giving the Crown the option which Smith O'Brien

denied, and he was transported to Tasmania. In 1848.
1854 he received a pardon upon condition that he did not return to Ireland, and in 1856 the condition was removed. He was then acknowledged to be what he had always in fact been, perfectly harmless. Throughout his life he never ceased to behave like a gentleman, and seldom failed to behave like a fool.

The Whig policy for Ireland.

It was well for the Whig Government that they had to deal with O'Brien, Mitchel, and O'Connor, not with Mazzini, Garibaldi, and Kossuth. For though they were prompt enough in repressing toy treason, their remedial policy was feeble and futile. They passed a temporary Aliens Removal Bill for the United Kingdom, the second reading of which was opposed by Sir William Molesworth, the accomplished leader of the philosophical Radicals. The Bill was deemed to be required because it is a first principle of the British Constitution that no native and no foreigner, however humble, not under the sentence of a Court, can be taken from any part of the British Empire against his will except by authority of Parliament, and it was thought desirable that the Executive should be empowered for a time to remove the foreign agents of revolution. On the 21st of July Lord John Russell introduced a Bill for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland till the 1st of March 1849. The Premier did not rest his case upon ordinary statistics of crime and outrage, such as have often done duty on similar occasions, but on evidence in the possession of Lord Clarendon that there was imminent danger of armed rebellion, and that numerous clubs had been formed for the purpose of organising insurrection. Lord Clarendon had indeed, though this was not known at the time, asked for arbitrary powers long before. The Bill, which was undoubtedly needed, had the

May 1.

1848. singular privilege of being supported by Peel, Disraeli, and Hume. Mr. Sharman Crawford's amendment for remedial instead of coercive measures obtained only 8 votes, and Lord John, finding himself so well sustained in the lobby, intimated to his followers that he should propose to take the remaining stages of the Bill at once. To this the House unanimously agreed, and there was of course no difficulty in the House of Lords. Yet, even in 1848, the voice of warning and remonstrance was heard. Parliament, or at least the House of Commons, was reminded that Ireland was suffering from political grievances as well as social evils. Mr. Bernal Osborne, a forcible speaker, though not a man of weight, denounced the Irish Government as a "mock Sovereign, a Brummagem Court, and a pinchbeck executive." Sir George Grey admitted that the established Church of Ireland was an indefensible anomaly, and expressed an opinion, in which Sir Robert Peel was known to concur, that further provision should be made for the Roman Catholic clergy.

The First Encumbered Estates Bill.

But these views or aspirations were not carried out. What the Government did was to pass the Encumbered Estates Bill of 1848. This Bill, which was introduced by Lord Chancellor Cottenham in the House of Lords, provided for the sale of mortgaged and embarrassed property through the Court of Chancery, with a Parliamentary title after five years. When the Bill came down to the House of Commons Sir James Graham rather pompously welcomed it as the means of restoring the Roman Catholics to the land. It proved wholly inoperative, for the Court of Chancery, even in Ireland, was a dead weight round the neck of all reform.

By a singular anomaly, for which the Constitution had not provided, Baron Lionel Rothschild

remained member of Parliament for the City of London, although the terms of the oath prevented him from taking his seat. Lord John Russell's Bill for removing the disabilities of the Jews, by permitting them to swear without the words "on the true faith of a Christian," passed the House of Commons in 1848 by substantial majorities, and went up to the House of Lords. There Lord Stanley opposed it; Lord Brougham, in a rather flippant manner, supported it; most of the bishops went against it; and it was thrown out by a majority of 35. The speeches of Bishop Thirlwall, on the one side, and Bishop Wilberforce on the other, were respectively models of the way in which a Christian prelate should, and the way in which he should not, address a legislative assembly. Bishop Thirlwall reviewed the history of persecution to show its futility, and proved how little doctrinal difference there was between a Jew and a Unitarian. Bishop Wilberforce blandly insinuated that Baron Rothschild had paid Lord John Russell's expenses as a candidate for the city. Lord John was a poor man, and even when Prime Minister was largely dependent upon his brother, the Duke of Bedford, one of the richest men in England.[1] But in the Bishop's suggestion there was no sort of truth, and under pressure from Lord Lansdowne he withdrew it.

1848. May 25.

This year sugar once more involved the Government in serious danger. As soon as the House of Commons met after the Christmas holidays, Lord George Bentinck had moved for a Select Committee on the importation of sugar and coffee from the West Indian Colonies. For this Committee, which the Government weakly granted, there was no

Feb. 8.

[1] Lord John was indebted to the Queen for the enjoyment of Pembroke Lodge, in Richmond Park, an ideal cottage for an overworked statesman, who could not in the session go far from London.

1848.

The West Indian Committee.

sufficient ground. The Act of 1846 had settled the question on the principles of Free Trade after full and ample discussion in both Houses of Parliament. Lord George was not even the Leader of the Protectionist party. He had been driven to resign on account of his vote for the removal of Jewish disabilities, and the Marquis of Granby had been elected to succeed him. But Lord Granby was a political cipher, who happened to be the eldest son of a duke, and the real as distinguished from the nominal leader was Mr. Disraeli. The Committee, with Lord George Bentinck in the chair, began their sittings on the 9th of February, and took evidence till the 22nd of May. They finally reported, by the casting vote of the chairman, that there should be a differential duty of ten shillings a hundredweight for six years in favour of colonial sugar. Whatever this report may be worth, the credit of it is due to Lord George Bentinck, whose indefatigable industry was acknowledged even by Sir Robert Peel. Of impartiality he was incapable, and he did not aim at it. He worked for the interests of Protection, and he obtained a qualified success, though even this could not console him for the fact that his horse Surplice, after he had sold it, won "that paramount and Olympian stake," to quote the language of his biographer, which less eloquent persons call the Derby. The report carried in the circumstances no weight whatever, and a strong Government would have disregarded it. The Government of Lord John Russell made a proposal which could not be logically defended, and which pleased nobody at the time, though Mr. Disraeli three years afterwards described it as "temperate and statesmanlike." The duty on foreign sugar was to continue as fixed by the Act of 1846. The duty on colonial sugar was to be immediately reduced, with the

result that there would be a gradually diminishing difference in favour of the Colonies till 1854, when there would be a uniform duty of ten shillings a hundredweight. This miserable compromise was only adopted in a full House by a majority of 15 votes. It was inconsistent not merely with the Act of 1846, but also with the declaration of adherence to that Act made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in granting the Committee. It was accompanied by a loan of half a million, alike unnecessary and inadequate, for the importation of free labour. It was denounced from the Protectionist side by Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Herries. Among the free traders who condemned it were Hume, Bright, Cobden, Villiers, Graham, and Peel. Sir Robert Peel was as consistent as Mr. Cobden, though in a different way. His hatred of slavery blinded him to the fact that Protection was of no use to the slave, and on this single question he agreed with the Protectionists, though he would not vote with them lest he should turn the Government out. 1848.

Lord George Bentinck and Lord Grey.

This was Lord George Bentinck's greatest achievement, and it was his last. It was disfigured by one of those violent attacks, imputing personal motives of the basest kind, which he habitually made upon his political opponents. A stupid blunder of a clerk in the Colonial Office prevented an important despatch from being delivered to the West Indian Committee. Lord George, on discovering the error, at once charged Mr. Hawes, the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, and Lord Grey, the Secretary of State, with deliberate fraud. Mr. Hawes defended himself with promptitude and spirit. But of course the brunt of the accusation fell upon Lord Grey. Lord Grey was subject to just censure for his narrow-minded arrogance and domineering temper. But a man of stricter integrity never presided over

1848. an English Department, and it is impossible to say more. He retorted in the House of Lords with a bitterness which, if not commendable, was at least natural; and Lord Stanley did himself no good by taking up the cause of Lord George. In the House of Commons Lord John Russell incensed the Protectionists by remarking, with the dry severity characteristic of him, that the practices imputed to his colleagues did not belong to English statesmen, though they were too common in the profession of which Lord George Bentinck had been a member. He afterwards explained this as a complimentary allusion to Lord George's success in detecting the fraudulent entry of a horse called Running Rein. Lord John had better have spared his reference, which was unnecessary and immaterial. But in forming an estimate of Lord George Bentinck's character, and of his motives for imputing baseness to others, we cannot wholly disregard the testimony of Mr. Greville, who was his cousin, and though he had quarrelled with him, knew him well.[1] Besides the Report of the West Indian Committee, Lord George Bentinck had the pleasure of seeing the Bill for the repeal of those Navigation Laws which so long hampered the carrying trade of Great Britain abandoned for the year. His satisfaction must have been none the less because Peel had made one of his finest speeches in support of the Bill, and had been received with a disgraceful uproar on rising to speak.

[1] Mr. Reeve, the editor of the "Greville Memoirs," has suppressed the details of Bentinck's racing transactions. Greville's words are these, and they ought to find a place in any book which records his accusations against other people: "Oh, for the inconsistency of human nature, the strange compound and medley of human motives and impulses, when the same man who crusaded against the tricks and villanies of others did not scruple to do things quite as bad as the worst of the misdeeds which he so vigorously and unrelentingly attacked."—"Greville Memoirs," 28th Sept. 1848.

1848.

Third Budget of 1848.

On the 25th of August the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced his third Budget for the year, and promised a reduction of expenditure, instead of the addition threatened in February. This was an unusual date even for a supplementary Budget, and the reduction did not clear away the deficit. There were still two millions to be borrowed without any plausible excuse, and against the convictions of the very men who proposed the loan. The session closed early in September with a slashing review by Mr. Disraeli, suggested by Lord George Bentinck, of all that the Government had failed to do. It was modelled on the similar performances of his patron Lord Lyndhurst during the administration of Lord Melbourne, and if less graceful was more amusing. "In France you have a Republic without Republicans. In Germany you have an Empire without an Emperor. And this is progress." Such is a fair sample of his style. It did little or no harm to the Government. But it increased the oratorical reputation of its author, and that after all was its object.

Disraeli's sessional epilogue.

Death of Lord George Bentinck;

A few days after the end of the longest session then known, on the 21st of September, Lord George Bentinck died very suddenly while walking from Welbeck to Clumber. He left nothing behind him. Like a meteor, he blazed suddenly out of the political horizon, and then disappeared into darkness for ever. Lord Melbourne died two months later, in his seventieth year. Lord Melbourne's work was done when he had completed the political education of the Queen, and after his retirement from office in 1841 the public heard very little of him. In private life he must have been the most delightful of companions. He was an omnivorous reader of ancient and modern authors, being both a scholar and a linguist. He had a memory almost as wonderful as

of Lord Melbourne, Nov. 24;

1848. Macaulay's, and far more humour. His witty, original phrases, always spontaneous and appropriate, were not mere epigrams, but the ripe and rich fruit of wisdom and experience. He had an odd taste for theology, quite unconnected with any dogmatic belief, and his love of literature amounted to a passion. There has hardly been in political history quite such another graft of the bookworm on the man of the world. Lord Melbourne departed on the threshold of old age. A few days afterwards died in the prime of life Charles Buller, Chief Commissioner of the Poor Law, the friend and secretary of Lord Durham, the friend and pupil of Carlyle. The legend that he was the real author of Lord Durham's Canadian Report rests on no sufficient ground. But he was a brilliant speaker in Parliament, and had just begun to show that he was equally capable of administration when he passed suddenly away. Buller's profession was the law. But he deserted the Bar for the House of Commons, where, as in society, he became extremely popular. His sense of the ludicrous was almost too keen, and he indulged his propensity to mockery with indiscriminate freedom. Yet his disposition was as kindly as his character was honourable, and his friends hoped that the sobering effect of office would redeem him from the reproval of flippancy, to which alone he was exposed.

of Charles Buller, Nov. 29.

CHAPTER VII

THE ERA OF RETRENCHMENT

1849 was almost as great a year for Free Trade as 1846. At the opening of the year Lord Auckland, the First Lord of the Admiralty, died, and Lord John offered the place to Sir James Graham, the staunchest free trader among the Peelites, except Sir Robert Peel himself. Graham declined the offer, and the Admiralty was then given to Sir Francis Baring, a Whig of the narrowest type. 1849. Whig overtures to Sir James Graham.

The session opened on the 3rd February with a joint attack by Lord Stanley in the House of Lords and by Mr. Disraeli in the House of Commons upon the economic policy of the Government — in fact, upon Free Trade. But the affair was mismanaged by Lord Stanley, who drafted an amendment to the Address, which was moved in both Houses. This motion, handed to Mr. Disraeli,[1] and by him to the Speaker at the last moment, in Lord Stanley's own handwriting, contained an express reference to foreign affairs, though the gist of it was directed to the "progressive depression of agricultural and colonial interests." The result was peculiar. In the House of Lords, where Lord Lansdowne gave a most revolting account of the atrocities perpetrated in Bad tactics of the Opposition.

[1] This was a formal recognition of Mr. Disraeli as leader of the Protectionist party in the House of Commons. Lord Stanley would have preferred Herries, but the party insisted on Disraeli, and Lord Granby retired in his favour. — "Greville Memoirs," 7th Feb. 1849.

1849. Messina by the Neapolitan troops under the white flag, Ministers, supported by the Duke of Wellington, had a majority of 2. In the House of Commons, where Lord Palmerston's foreign policy was thoroughly popular, the amendment was withdrawn. Thus a clear issue between Free Trade and Protection was avoided. It was, however, soon raised upon the Bill for the repeal of the Navigation Laws,[1] again brought in by Mr. Labouchere, President of the Board of Trade. From the repeal of these laws, which was the practical completion of Free Trade, dates the commercial supremacy of Great Britain during the next fifty years, and her virtual monopoly of the carrying trade. The Navigation Laws provided in substance that foreign goods must be imported either in British ships or in the ships of the country from which they came, and they also restricted the employment of foreign sailors in the merchant service. The Bill was read a second time in the House of Commons by a majority of 56, after a strange speech from Mr. Gladstone, who, free trader and Peelite as he was, perversely insisted that the principle of reciprocity should in this particular instance be applied. On the 23rd of April, the day fixed for the third reading, Sir James Graham, an alarmist of the highest calibre, made a profound impression upon the House by predicting that, if the Bill were not carried, Canada would be lost to the Empire. The Canadians, he said, were only willing to accept the sacrifice of protection in their favour if it were not employed against them. The real struggle, however, was in the House of Lords. The Government were determined to pass the Bill, which did some-

The repeal of the Navigation Laws.

March 13.

[1] The Navigation Act of Charles the Second, the principal statute on the subject, was aimed at the carrying trade of the Dutch, then the largest in the world.

thing to redeem their political reputation, and Lord Lansdowne intimated, not obscurely, that if they were defeated they would resign. On the other hand, Lord Stanley exerted the utmost powers of his eloquence against the Bill, and went so far as to reprove the Duke of Wellington for not supporting him. The conqueror of Napoleon was scarcely the man to be frightened by the Rupert of debate, for whose classical oratory he did not care "one two-penny damn." The Duke disliked the Bill, and would have voted against it on its merits. But as Commander-in-Chief he would not oppose the Government, and he was sincerely convinced that Protection could not be revived. Lord Brougham thundered against the measure, and vainly endeavoured to prove that he was consistent as a free trader in opposing it. But the consistency of Lord Brougham had become a joke, and rather a bad joke. His oddities and his vanities, such as his whimsical desire to become a French citizen, were an inexhaustible theme for the delightful pencil of John Leech. Brougham's great days were spent in the House of Commons. As Lord Chancellor he was a prodigy, and on the whole a beneficent one. After his exclusion from office by Lord Melbourne in 1835, he lost his balance, and, except for the active part he took in the repeal of the Corn Laws, the rest of his life was wasted in multifarious ways. On this occasion he was joined by Lord Lyndhurst, who broke through his long silence to plead earnestly for the remaining fetters on commerce. The strongest card which the Opposition could play was the authority of Adam Smith, who, while admitting that "the act of navigation is not favourable to foreign commerce, or to the growth of that opulence which can arise from it," adds that, "as defence is of much more importance than opulence,

1849.

Lord Brougham's "consistency."

1849. the act of navigation is, perhaps, the wisest of all the commercial regulations of England."[1] The praise was faint, but such as it was it was undeserved. The great defensive force of the British Empire is the Navy, and the Navy as it existed in the time of the Navigation Laws is not fit to be compared with the Navy of to-day. Homer sometimes nods, and Adam Smith could afford to indulge in a nap. The second reading of the Bill was carried by a majority of 10, and it would be interesting to know how many of the Peers who voted Not Content had read the *Wealth of Nations*. The Bishops turned the scale in favour of commercial freedom. On the third reading the Opposition walked out, and the Bill then became law.

Reduction of expenditure. A large reduction of the Estimates was promised in the Queen's Speech for 1849. Cobden and financial reform had for the moment triumphed.

Feb. 26. Cobden himself, however, was not satisfied, and moved that the expenditure of the country should be cut down by the definite sum of ten millions, thus bringing it back to the point at which it stood in 1835. This motion, less practical, or at least less business-like, than most of Mr. Cobden's, was rejected by 275 votes to 78. But Sir Charles Wood did not meet it with a mere negative. He showed that he had saved a million and a half, chiefly by knocking ten thousand men off the army, despite the protests of the Duke. Mr. Disraeli, a few days later, tried a different tack, which would assuredly not have led, as we know by bitter experience, to public economy. He proposed that half the local rates should be paid by the Treasury. Cobden supported the Government against Disraeli, as Disraeli had supported the Government against Cobden, and the motion was defeated by 91. The Chancellor of the Ex-

[1] *Wealth of Nations*, book iv. chapter ii.

chequer, whose theories were sound enough, proved 1849.
that the grant in aid would be no relief to the farmers, inasmuch as the rates were paid by the landlords. This speech of Sir Charles Wood's was pronounced by Peel to be not only a good but a great one. In the summer Mr. Disraeli returned July 2.
to the charge by moving, as Cobden had moved in days that were past, for a Committee of Inquiry into the state of the nation. He complained of increased expenditure, though it had been reduced, and of increased taxation, though it had not been imposed. But his real purpose was to show the evils of Free Trade, and he drew from Sir Robert Peel a masterly defence of his own policy, pronounced by Mr. Bright to be the finest speech he had ever heard in the House of Commons. It is indeed a State paper rather than a speech, and should be read by all students of economic science with the same care as Mr. Pitt's budget speech of 1798, or Mr. Gladstone's of 1853.[1] It made an end of Mr. Disraeli and his motion, which was rejected by a majority of 140. The Government, in spite of all their blunders, closed the session stronger than they were when it opened. Lord Palmerston was able to insert in the Royal Speech a paragraph announcing that peace between Prussia and Denmark, threatened by the affairs of Schleswig-Holstein, had been kept by the mediation of England. But the Government had had an unmistakable warning to be economical. That most incalculable of politicians, Henry Drummond, the Irvingite, acting for once with Joseph Hume, had beaten them by three votes on a motion in favour of further retrenchment. Mr. Drummond was so far from being a Radical that he might rather be called a Jacobite. His Toryism was the Toryism of the eighteenth century, and he regarded wars as

[1] *Peel's Collected Speeches* (1853), vol. iv. pp. 804–822.

1849. Whig inventions. But he had no influence in the House, and his success was therefore the more ominous. Peace and frugality have never been so popular, before or since, as they were in the year of continental reaction, 1849.

England and Ireland. Ireland was at this date a subject upon which almost all Englishmen were agreed. Their attitude towards her was one of contemptuous pity, and Mr. Cobden declared that three Irishmen could not be induced to work together for any rational purpose. Foreigners not unnaturally took a different view, and were apt to compare British rule in Ireland with Austrian rule in Italy. This theory was brought to the notice of Lord Palmerston, who had, as usual, his answer ready. English, he said, was spoken throughout Ireland, and the "propertied classes" were opposed to a repeal of the union. He might have added that there was no Italian Ulster. Even a great statesman, a Pitt, a Peel, or a Gladstone, could hardly have done much for Ireland in 1849. The Whigs could not do much, but they did a little. After the Habeas Corpus Act had again been suspended for six months,[1] an amending Bill was carried to substitute Commissioners for the Court of Chancery in administering the Encumbered Estates Act, and under the amended statute a great many sales were carried out. A Parliamentary title to land, even Irish land, was worth having, and speculators purchased who cared for nothing but their rents. In short, the Act did a great deal for the landlords, but nothing at all for the tenants. Meanwhile the state of Ireland was going rapidly from bad to worse. The potato crop of 1848 had been a failure, and the people were too weak to bear privations. Famine had reduced the population

The Second Encumbered Estates Act.

[1] Lord Clarendon wanted twelve, but the Cabinet cut him down to six.

from eight millions to six. Emigration was reducing it still further, and yet the distress was terrible. Early in the year Sir Charles Wood had to propose a grant of fifty thousand pounds for the poorest unions. There was some difficulty in getting the money, for public opinion in England had been exasperated by Irish violence and the escapades of Young Ireland. *Punch* depicted the Irish peasant as having nothing human about him, not even the form, and as asking alms for the purchase of a blunderbuss. This tone of cruel mockery has done more to embitter the relations between the two countries than the eighty-seven Coercion Acts passed since the Union. However, the fifty thousand pounds were voted, and a general Bill was passed providing that there should be a central fund in Ireland for the relief of the poor, in aid of which each electoral division should be rated at sixpence in the pound. This Bill passed its second reading in the House of Lords by a bare majority, and in Committee an important change was made. As the Bill left the Commons, it provided that where the poor rate in any union rose to five shillings in the pound, a contribution might be levied from other unions up to two shillings. The Lords struck out this limit. In doing so they undoubtedly infringed the privileges of the Commons. But time pressed, the case was urgent, and the privilege was waived. Early in May the Chancellor of the Exchequer again came to the House for three hundred thousand pounds under the Land Improvement Act, and two hundred thousand towards arterial drainage. All this was ointment for broken bones. Not merely independent Radicals like Mr. Bright, but the Prime Minister himself, perceived that what the Irish tenant wanted was security in his holding. Sir Robert Peel, though he acquiesced in the Encumbered Estates

1849.

Feb. 7. Another Irish grant.

The Irish Poor Law.

Sir Robert Peel's plan.

1849. Bill as the best measure available in the circumstances, spoke strongly in favour of the Government becoming model landlords on a large scale, and setting an example of how estates should be managed. He followed up his speech by a remarkable Memorandum, which he handed to Lord Clarendon for his advice and guidance. This Memorandum is printed in the *Peel Papers*.[1] It is more speculative than most of Peel's political proposals. The policy ultimately adopted both by Peel and by the Government was Lord Clarendon's, and that was the policy of the Encumbered Estates Acts. Coercion notwithstanding, isolated disturbances continued, and at Dolly's Brae, in County Down, on that melancholy anniversary, the 12th of July, an organised affray between Ribbonmen and Orangemen resulted in the loss of several lives. But, in truth, the Irish people were sinking from the excitement of disaffection into the lethargy of despair. They received the Queen and Prince Albert, who paid a private and unceremonious visit to the country in August,[2] with the courtesy which belongs to their race. But they were neither contented nor dangerous. The loss of O'Connell was irreparable, and the effect of the famine was crushing. Death by the visitation of God had fallen upon the spirit of Ireland.

Another kind of Jew Bill. This year Lord John Russell tried another method of enfranchising the Jews, and proposed a thorough reform of the Parliamentary oaths, which were then cumbrous and voluminous. The second reading of his Bill was carried by a large majority, after a maiden speech of great promise from Mr.

[1] Vol. iii. pp. 513–516.

[2] The poverty and misery of the country were so dire that all needless expenditure had to be avoided. If the visit had been more often repeated in happier times, some impetus might have been given to the revival of trade by those who always follow in the train of royalty.

Frederick Peel, second son of Sir Robert, whose subsequent career was less brilliant, though not less useful, than his friends then hoped and expected. A most sensible amendment, moved by Mr. Vernon Smith, the first Lord Lyveden, to abolish all oaths, except the oath of allegiance, was lost, and the same fate befell the Bill itself in the House of Lords after a very unequal duel between Archbishop Sumner of Canterbury and Archbishop Whately of Dublin, the distinguished logician and economist, who would have been an ornament of any assembly. The Lords were quite safe in rejecting the Bill, which had nothing to recommend it, except reason and justice. Behind it there was no driving force of popular opinion. The dangers apprehended from the admission of the Jews to Parliament were imaginary and fantastic. As Macaulay said in 1833, the power which the Jew had was far greater than that of which he was deprived. "The Jew must not sit in Parliament; but he may be the proprietor of all the ten-pound houses in a borough." The Jews, since the removal of their disabilities, have done comparatively little in Parliament. Their influence is, as it was, financial, and is exercised behind the scenes. 1849.

The Jewish question was in the hands of the Government. The Bill for the reform of the marriage laws, introduced in 1849 and for so many years afterwards, was in the charge of a private member. No Government, Liberal or Conservative, has ever taken the grievance up, though a grievance to this day it remains. The Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, as it is popularly called, was brought in at that time by Mr. James Stuart Wortley, afterwards Recorder of London and Solicitor-General. It proposed to allow marriage with the niece as well as with the sister of a

The Deceased Wife's Sister Bill.

1849. deceased wife, though the former provision was subsequently abandoned. As this measure has been before Parliament and the public for more than fifty years, some explanation of it seems to be necessary here. Before 1835 all marriages within the prohibited degrees were what lawyers call voidable, but not void. That is to say that they could be impeached in the ecclesiastical courts by an interested person during the lifetime of the parties, but if not so challenged they held
1835. good. In 1835 Lord Lyndhurst introduced a Bill to legalise marriages within the degrees of affinity contracted up to that time. The real object of this Bill, it is notorious, was to save a Duke who had married his sister-in-law from the possible consequences of his irregularity. But in order to disarm opposition, especially the opposition of the Bishops, Lord Lyndhurst, whose general principles were fluid, proposed that all future marriages within the prohibited degrees should be absolutely void. A statute passed in such a manner deserved no moral respect, for its very enactment was a
1849. scandal to the Legislature. But Mr. Stuart Wortley's Bill was open to objections of much weight and force. It was quite illogical, for it did not enable a woman to marry her deceased husband's brother, nor touch the other degrees of affinity, as distinguished from consanguinity. Moreover, it had a retrospective application, and indemnified those who had deliberately broken the law. Instead of fastening upon these points, its opponents, especially Mr. Roundell Palmer, afterwards Lord Chancellor Selborne, indulged in learned disquisitions upon the Book of Leviticus, which is in the first place very obscure, and in the second place of very doubtful obligation upon Christians. The real ground for the Bill is that it would relieve from a social stigma men and women otherwise of

the very highest character who have made such marriages in the exercise of what they conscientiously believed to be their moral right, and often to promote the interests of their children. The most cogent speech in favour of the Bill was made by a singularly eloquent man, Mr. Cockburn, Member for Southampton, known to a later generation as Lord Chief Justice of England. Sir George Grey, speaking for himself and not for the Government, supported it, and he was an orthodox Christian if ever there was one. Although Mr. Goulburn resisted it on behalf of Cambridge, and Mr. Gladstone on behalf of Oxford, the second reading of the Bill was carried by 177 votes to 143. It had to be dropped before the end of the session owing to the determined stand made against it, and though it has since often passed the House of Commons, it has never yet (1903) passed the House of Lords. There is no popular excitement when the Lords, with a full muster of Bishops, throw it out. As Dean Hook said, the working classes do not care for the Bill, because they do not regard the law. 1849.

Equally unsuccessful, though of far more general importance, was Mr. Cobden's proposal of arbitration as a substitute for war. He made it in a speech full of that practical ability which was his most distinguishing characteristic. Quoting Bentham's definition of war as "mischief on the largest scale," he argued that he was only asking nations to do before war what they usually did after it, when they accepted the good offices of their neighbours. There is no answer to such arguments, which in our day have been recognised by the Conference at The Hague, except the habitual pugnacity of man. Lord Palmerston, though he moved and carried the previous question, treated Cobden and his motion with gravity and respect. International arbitration. June 12.

1849. He had indeed himself, only a few months before,
January 20, 1848. privately suggested in a letter to the Prime Minister a treaty of arbitration with the United States, in which moreover the citizens of each country should agree not to take part in any war against the other.[1]

[1] Ashley's *Life of Palmerston*, vol. i. pp. 59–60.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EXPANSION OF ENGLAND

THE expansion of England, about which Sir John Seeley wrote his brilliant and fascinating book, occurred for the most part in the eighteenth century, and in the early years of the nineteenth. But scarcely any one, except Clive and Hastings, did so much for the extension, and, it must be added, for the consolidation, of the British Empire in India as Lord Dalhousie. The Earl of Dalhousie arrived in India at the beginning of 1848. He did not go out with any grandiose designs of annexation or conquest. Like his predecessor, Lord Hardinge, though there was a whole generation between them, he was a Peelite, and he was personally devoted to Sir Robert. Peel took a great and continuous interest in the affairs of India, as his correspondence with Hardinge, printed in the *Peel Papers*, is enough to show. But he considered the Indian Empire "overgrown," and shrank from adding to it. He cordially approved of Hardinge's decision not to annex the whole Punjab in 1846 after the first Sikh War, though it should be observed that one-third of the Maharajah's dominions were then incorporated with British India, and that a Protectorate was simultaneously established over the remainder. Lord Dalhousie was well acquainted with these events, and entirely approved of Lord

1848.

The expansion of England.

Lord Dalhousie.

1848. Hardinge's policy. But he was not prepared for what happened in 1848. In April of that year two young Englishmen, Mr. Vans Agnew of the Civil Service, and Lieutenant Anderson, were treacherously murdered at Multan in the Punjab by the order or with the connivance of the local chief, Mulraj. They had gone to Multan on an official errand, and were under the special protection of Great Britain. "We are not the last of the English," said Vans Agnew, just before his death. He had previously written in pencil a note to Sir Frederick Currie, the nearest resident civilian, asking for help. This note fell into the hands of the future Sir Herbert Edwardes, then a juvenile subaltern, who divined its urgency and opened it. He had only four hundred men, and Mulraj had four thousand. "I am like a terrier barking at a tiger," he said. His heroic and successful efforts to keep the Sikhs at bay throughout the summer are among the most glorious achievements in the history of British India. At the request of Sir Frederick Currie, General Whish undertook the siege of Multan. But the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Gough, absolutely refused to do anything at all, and Lord Dalhousie, with a diffidence which he never afterwards showed, shrank from interfering with the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief. In September, however, he could stand it no longer. He reinforced Lord Gough with seventeen thousand men, and he went to the frontier himself. He was then thirty-six, a civilian who had played only a subordinate part in public life. But he was a born ruler of men. His spirit was undaunted; his powers of work were almost unlimited; and he had Lord Chatham's gift of inspiring others with the confidence he felt himself. He magnified his office, and did not hesitate to assert his authority even over the most distinguished of Anglo-Indians,

The troubles in the Punjab.

The siege of Multan.

Lord Gough's inaction.

Dalhousie's character.

such as John and Henry Lawrence. But indeed 1848.
the assertion soon became unnecessary, and the authority was recognised by all. He was master because he was entitled to be, and because he was fit to be. Like the high-minded man in the Ethics, he thought himself equal to great things, and he was equal to them. At the same time he was fully sensible of his duty to the Court of Directors, and of the support to be gained from public 1848–9.
opinion at home. His style was exactly what the style of an enlightened despot should be. It was dignified, lucid, and at times majestic — the style of a man to whom the honour of the mother country had been committed as a sacred trust.

Lord Dalhousie's career in India, which was twice the ordinary length, was full of labour, and full of trouble, from the beginning to the end. It may almost be said to have begun with disaster. The siege of Multan, after weeks were wasted, had to be raised, and though it was resumed in the winter, the city held out till the 2nd of January 1849. Eleven days afterwards was fought the disastrous battle of Chilianwallah, in which four British guns and five stands of colours were taken by the Sikhs, while the British losses amounted to upwards of two thousand. Chilianwallah has been described by high military authority as a drawn battle, and a biographer of Lord Dalhousie[1] has called it "an evening battle fought by a gallant old man in a passion." A drawn battle in India is a defeat for the Paramount Power, and the news of Chilianwallah was received in England with a storm of popular indignation. The Government decided to recall Lord Gough, and to send out in his stead Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Scinde, famous, among other things, for having announced

The battle of Chilianwallah.

[1] Sir William Hunter.

1849. his conquest in the one word "Peccavi."[1] On the 21st of February, however, the tables were completely turned. Lord Gough fought and won the splendid victory of Goojerat, in which almost all the enemy's guns were captured, the power of the Sikhs entirely broken, and their Afghan allies driven back whence they came. Public opinion at home veered round at once. The thanks of both Houses were voted to the Governor-General, who was made a Marquess; to Lord Gough, who was made a Viscount; and to the whole Indian army. The Duke of Wellington referred in the House of Lords with unusual warmth to the services of "my Lord Gough." But the battle of Chilianwallah is a blunder not to be explained away, and there is evidence that Lord Gough ought to have been removed from his command before he had the opportunity of fighting it. That Lord Gough was the bravest of the brave all who served under him agreed. But in the first Sikh War Lord Hardinge, himself a brilliant soldier, was obliged practically to supersede the Commander-in-Chief. Writing to Sir Robert Peel from the camp at Ferozepore on the 30th of December 1845, a "secret and confidential" letter, Lord Hardinge, then Sir Henry Hardinge, said: "Sir Hugh Gough has no capacity for order or administration. He is at the outposts wonderfully active, but the more important points, which he dislikes, of framing proper orders, and looking to their execution, are very much neglected. His staff is very bad, and the state of the army is loose, disorderly, and unsatisfactory."[2] Sir Hugh Gough's peerage may have been deserved by his gallantry. But to retain him in the chief military command of India after this letter was a crime.

Gough's victory at Goojerat.

Gough and Hardinge.

[1] After the glorious battle of Meeanee, and the consequent capture of Hyderabad.

[2] *Peel Papers*, vol. iii. p. 299.

The battle of Goojerat, which was won by the superior artillery of the British force, involved the conquest of the Punjab. Lord Dalhousie had to consider what he would do with his victory, and he came to the conclusion that, after two Sikh wars, a third must be avoided by annexing the Land of the Five Rivers to the British Crown. He accordingly annexed it by Proclamation on the 29th of March. He defended this course to the Directors in a long and able despatch. After pointing out the difficulties of the old system, and showing that the Sikhs had not kept their part of the bargain, he dwelt upon the serious nature of the rising, and argued that the motives must indeed be strong which had brought together tribes so mutually hostile as the Sikhs and the Afghans. The inference he drew from these facts was that the Punjab must be put under British government for the security of North-Western India. The high authority of Sir Henry Lawrence was opposed to annexation. But scarcely another voice was raised against Lord Dalhousie's policy, which the Directors, the Cabinet, and Parliament alike accepted. The Governor-General at once took up the work of settlement. The Maharajah, Dhuleep Singh, then a boy of eleven, who afterwards devoted many years to imitating British squires, and the end of his life to intriguing against British rule in India, received the handsome compensation of fifty thousand a year for not being allowed to sit on the throne of Runjeet. The administration of the new province was entrusted to a board of three. Henry and John Lawrence, who did not always agree upon Indian policy, were associated with Mr. Mansel, a civilian, because the Governor-General did not choose to be under the influence of any family, however distinguished. But that illustrious pair of brothers never allowed anything

1849.

The annexation of the Punjab.

Henry Lawrence objects.

The Lawrences' work in the Punjab.

1849. to interfere with duty, and the result of their efforts was that the Punjab remained faithful to Great Britain in those dark days when the existence of British rule in India was threatened with imminent destruction.

From the year 1849 dates the beginning of real self-government for the British Colonies, and of that practical independence which, paradoxical as it may seem, is the source of their enthusiastic loyalty to the British Crown. Mr. Disraeli, who passed through many phases of thought on this subject, and is not fairly to be judged by any one of them, attacked the admission of "slave-grown" sugar as the death-blow of the Colonial system. As a matter of fact, there was no connection between the two things; for our Colonial system rests upon the absolute freedom both of the mother country and the Colonies to make such financial arrangements as in their own interests they think best. Mr. Cobden was the consistent advocate of representative institutions for the Colonies, at which Lord Brougham scoffed and jeered. But Cobden erroneously supposed that Canada with representative institutions would follow the example of the United States. He under-rated the "golden link of the Crown," and that sentiment of patriotic affection which has proved stronger than legal bonds. From the purely commercial point of view he was right. Trade, as has been well said, does not follow the flag; it follows the consumer. We can do as much business with a foreign nation as with an integral part of the British Empire, and Colonial tariffs have seldom been framed with any special regard for the profit of Great Britain. But there is another side of the picture which Cobden, true statesman though he was, did not see. Colonial loyalty is nothing new. In one of his speeches on the Sugar

The Colonial system.

Bill of 1848, Sir Robert Peel paid a just and eloquent tribute to the fidelity which most of the Colonies displayed in the American War, and all of them in the War with France. That that fidelity would be strengthened, and not weakened, by taking off the bearing-rein from their necks, was not sufficiently perceived by the Manchester school. They showed a want of faith in their own principles, which they might have supplied by refreshing their memories with Mr. Burke's great speech on conciliation with America. Perhaps no one in 1849, unless it was Sir William Molesworth, fully understood that independence is an ambiguous term, and that local independence may be the best guarantee for imperial unity. The Colonial Office in 1849, and long afterwards, was extremely unpopular. Lord Grey was one of the ablest men who ever presided over it, and he was a true friend of rational freedom. But he lacked sympathy and imagination. He was the embodiment of red tape. The permanent Under-Secretary, Mr. Herman Merivale, was a distinguished economist, historian, and man of letters. But he belonged in Colonial matters to the old school — the school of leading-strings and judicious advice. Early in the session of 1849, at the end of February, a furious onslaught was made upon the Colonial Office by Mr. Henry Bailie, the Member for Inverness-shire, who accused Lord Grey of the most tyrannous maladministration in Ceylon, where the Governor, Lord Torrington, had put down a rebellion with extreme severity, disregarded the plea of the Chief Justice for mercy to the offenders, flogged a native chief, and hanged a Buddhist priest in full canonicals. The feeling of the House was so strongly against the Government that Ministers agreed to the appointment of a Committee in order to escape

1849.

Unpopularity of the Colonial Office.

Lord Torrington in Ceylon.

1849.

defeat.[1] Nothing came of the Committee, nor of the Report, and the whole subject, though discussed in Parliament, was soon forgotten. Such was Colonial administration in 1849.

The Canadian Indemnity Bill.

A much more serious question arose in May. Canada was at that time the only colony which possessed really representative institutions, being governed on the famous principles of Lord Durham. The Legislature of Lower Canada had passed a Bill to indemnify those who suffered losses in the rebellion ten years before. This Bill had received the assent of Lord Elgin, the Governor-General, and was therefore law, although Lord Grey might still have advised the Queen to put her veto upon it. While persons convicted of treason were excepted from the benefit of compensation, it was alleged by the more aggressive loyalists that a number of rebels would be entitled to relief, and this they regarded as an intolerable grievance. These loyalists showed their loyalty by pelting the representative of the Queen, and burning the Parliament House at Montreal to the ground. Lord Elgin stood firm, and was supported, as he well deserved to be, by the Government at home. But the Opposition took the side

Riots at Montreal.

[1] The Report of this Committee was for the most part the work of the Colonial Office itself, in the person of Henry Taylor, author of *Philip von Artevelde*, who gives in his *Autobiography* a curious account of the proceedings. "I attended the Committee frequently," he says, "to hear what was going on, and I took note of Sir Robert Peel, who was a member of it. There he sat, day after day and week after week, profoundly silent. . . . Weary hours were wasted every day on subjects beside the purpose. Sir Robert Peel looked on with inexhaustible patience. . . . Nobody was convinced by anybody else, nor was there much reason why they should be, and the contention appearing as endless as it was unprofitable, all parties became utterly tired of themselves, and each other, and the whole concern. Then rose Sir Robert, and what a miracle was wrought when the dumb man spoke." Sir Robert rose for the purpose of submitting a historical report drafted by Mr. Taylor, with a few "vague conciliatory sentences" added by himself. As he said, he never prescribed until he was called in; but a process of exhaustion may amount to a call.

of arson against rebellion, and Mr. Herries, the same who had the doubtful honour to be Lord Goderich's Chancellor of the Exchequer, moved that the Bill should be disallowed. He was defeated by 291 votes against 150, but the supreme issue of Canadian self-government was not raised with adequate clearness. Mr. Gladstone, after a somewhat irrelevant denunciation of rebellion, asserted the right of Parliament to override a Colonial legislature. The legal right was undeniable. But so was the right to tax America, vindicated against his own better judgment by Lord North. Lord John Russell pleaded the practical impossibility of discriminating Canadians who were loyal from Canadians who were not, and Sir Robert Peel opposed on constitutional grounds the dangerous motion of Mr. Herries. The real point was bluntly put by Mr. Roebuck, an erratic politician, but an old friend of Canada. "This," he said in effect, "is Canadian, not English money. The Canadians have a right to do as they please with it." Roebuck's common sense is worth more than all the elaborate sophistry expended upon this subject by Brougham and Lyndhurst in the House of Lords. Lord Brougham took the same line as Mr. Herries, and was only beaten by the narrow majority of three. Lord Lyndhurst, who knew something of North American colonists, having been born in Massachusetts before the declaration of independence, and Lord Stanley, who had been Secretary of State for the Colonies, should have known better than to take part in a movement which, if it had been successful, might have led to worse disturbances than those of 1838.

1849.

Proposed disallowance of the Bill.

Recognition of Colonial independence.

The other colonial event of this year, besides the cession of Vancouver's Island to the Hudson's Bay Company, was the refusal of the public at the

1849. Cape to permit the landing of convicts at Cape Town. For the obstinate blunder of transportation the responsibility must be divided between the Colonial Office and the Home Office, which, under a Whig Administration, were characteristically filled by cousins. An Order in Council, dated the 4th of September 1848, gave authority for landing at Cape Town a number of convicts, euphemistically called ticket-of-leave men. This Order excited a tempest of local indignation, and on the 4th of July 1849 a public meeting at Cape Town passed votes of censure upon the Governor and the Secretary of State. The Governor was Sir Harry Smith, an excellent soldier, but not very well qualified for the work of civilian administration. His chief idea was that discipline must be maintained, and in this case he was quite unable to maintain it. Lord Grey was driven to the adoption of conciliatory tactics, which were not his favourite weapons. In a despatch to Sir Harry he offered to furnish the colony with a free labourer for every convict received. Emigration was then much in the air, and was regarded by benevolent persons as the panacea for the ills of the poor. But the colonists were not to be cajoled, and were resolved that the convicts should never be allowed to land. When on the 19th of September the convict ship, the *Neptune*, arrived in Simon's Bay, she could get no provisions from shore, and she ultimately sailed away with her cargo. This was a stroke fatal to transportation, and the beginning of the end. The unspeakable horrors of Norfolk Island had recently been, so far as they could be, unveiled. Penal servitude had not yet been invented, and the official mind could not grasp the idea of a Colonial system which did not include penal settlements. But Cape Colony, by its bold, timely, and decisive

Refusal of convicts by Cape Colony.

action, had brought things to a head. Grave as the direct issue was, its indirect consequences were graver, or at least larger, still. The Colonies were determined that they would no longer be used as convenient appendages of the mother country. They meant to live their own lives, and to carve out their own future. The expulsion of the *Neptune* from South African waters was not less momentous, and far more auspicious, than the jettison of the tea in Boston Harbour. For Lord John Russell did not share the pliability of Lord North, nor did Queen Victoria resemble her grandfather, George the Third. The Whigs, who always required stirring, were stirred by the laudable resistance of Cape Colony into an honest effort to remodel the relations between Great Britain at home and the Greater Britain beyond the seas. They were, however, extremely averse, as were all parties at that time, from extending the area of British occupation in South Africa. Sir Harry Smith, after the Kaffir War of 1847, defeated the Boers, as the Dutch farmers of the Cape were called, at Boom-plaats, and proclaimed the Queen's sovereignty over the territory between the Orange and Vaal Rivers. But the Government refused to incur any expense, or to assume any responsibility, and the annexation was never formally recognised by the Crown. Lord Grey would, if he could, have limited the British possessions in South Africa to Cape Town and Simon's Bay.

1849.

The Orange sovereignty.

CHAPTER IX

THEOLOGY AND LITERATURE

1847-49. The Oxford Movement, the ecclesiastical and sacerdotal revival of the nineteenth century, was injured but not destroyed by the secession of John Henry Newman to Roman Catholicism in 1845. It received some stimulus from the appointment of Dr. Hampden to the See of Hereford in 1847. Dr. Hampden was consecrated by the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Sumner, a Low Churchman, and a lover of peace. His predecessor, Archbishop Howley, who died just in time, is reported to have said that rather than consecrate Hampden he would go to the Tower. Few heretics, real or sham, have been less interesting than Dr. Hampden,[1] and once he had become a bishop, little more was heard of him. His consecration asserted the right of the Crown to select for any bishopric any person qualified by law. If the Dean and Chapter of Hereford had refused to elect Dr. Hampden, they would have been liable to banishment and to the confiscation of their goods. It is not to be imagined that these penalties would in the nineteenth century have been exacted, and they would

The Hampden case.

[1] Hampden's alleged heresy, according to his biographer in the *National Dictionary*, was the proposition that the authority of the Scriptures is higher than the authority of the Church, which all Protestants have held since the time of Luther. But he seems to have been also considered unsound on the inspiration of the Old Testament.

1847–49.

have been needless. For by one of the Reformation statutes, which made the Church of England a Parliamentary Church, Hampden could have been created Bishop of Hereford under Letters Patent. The only measure which could defeat the right of the Crown would be a refusal by all the Bishops to consecrate the Crown's nominee. But at that time the High Church party, though steadily making way among the clergy and the clerical laity, had very few representatives on the Bench. Among the early leaders of Tractarianism was Richard Hurrell Froude, whose published *Remains* show brilliant gifts, but contain more prejudice than intelligence. His brother, James Anthony Froude, the future historian, came at Oxford under the influence of Newman, but he soon fell away, and his *Nemesis of Faith*, which appeared in 1848, is the first fruit of the sceptical reaction against Newmanism. This little book is unworthy of its author, and not fit to be compared with the masterpieces of his genius. It caused, however, no small stir, and led to the resignation of his Fellowship at Exeter, where a zealous tutor burnt the volume in the quadrangle of the college. Froude's exquisite style, which matured and mellowed with years, was originally modelled on Newman's. But though he had been ordained in his youth a clergyman of the English Church, he soon abandoned the practice of his profession, and became editor of *Fraser's Magazine*. His breach with the Tractarians was complete, and his master in things spiritual was Thomas Carlyle.

The two Froudes.

The reaction against Tractarianism.

The year 1848 was distinguished by the exceedingly high level of its literary production. Before its close appeared the first two volumes of Macaulay's *History*. Their success was immediate, and prodigious. Everybody read them,

Macaulay's *History*.

1847-49. everybody talked about them, almost everybody admired them. The period of which they treated, the reign of James the Second, was little known. The standard History of England at that time was Hume's, which has little to recommend it except the beauty of the language. Macaulay's style has some obvious defects, and, as he himself said, it is a dangerous one to imitate. But it is always forcible, often eloquent, never obscure. He was justly proud, as Sir George Trevelyan tells us, of a vote passed by a number of Lancashire operatives to thank him for "having written a History of England which working men could understand."[1] Great scholar as he was, and profoundly learned, he had the orator's instinct for making his points clear to the simplest mind. He is commonly called the Whig historian, but he was rather a Williamite than a Whig. William is the hero of the book, and all students of history must wish that they had from the same pen a portrait of William's great-grandfather, called the Silent. Not the least valuable part of these volumes, which made the fortune of author and publisher, was the summary of English history before the accession of James, with which they opened. Of this Professor Freeman said that it was perfect, and could not, even in the light of later knowledge, be improved. Since the loss of his seat, and his resignation of office, Macaulay's leisure had been unbroken by public engagements, and he had devoted his whole time to the task of his life. In 1849, upon the death of Professor Smyth, Lord John Russell offered him the Chair of Modern History at Cambridge, and Prince Albert as Chancellor pressed it upon his acceptance. But Macaulay, who always did a thing thoroughly when he did it at all, refused to be

[1] *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, vol. ii. p. 239.

drawn aside from his main purpose by duties which, as he understood them, would have been arduous and engrossing.[1] Henceforth he confined his literary labours to his book, and to the masterly series of biographies which he wrote for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 1847-49.

Another great historian in another line of history completed his masterpiece during the year of revolutions. Macaulay's chief work has been called, most unjustly, an historical fiction. *Vanity Fair* might be called with more justice a fictitious history. A novel without a hero was a bold experiment. But in Thackeray's hands it was, as all the world knows, a brilliant success. *Vanity Fair*, which owes perhaps some part of its fame to the matchless felicity of its title, is an unsparing, in some respects a savage satire upon the social foibles of mankind. The story is put back to the days of Waterloo, though the human nature in it belongs to all time. But the original of Lord Steyne had not long been dead; the whole tone of the book is modern; and it breathes the spirit of contempt for mere authority or rank, not distinguished by genius or virtue, which was characteristic of England when it appeared. Thackeray can hardly be compared, except to be contrasted, with his great rival, Dickens. Dickens painted with a broader brush, and touched simpler issues. His sarcasm is obvious, almost conventional. His humour culminates in uproarious fun. Thackeray, with equal genius, had far more sensitive refinement, and also more originality or inventiveness of method. Through his satire there runs a vein of serious moral purpose. His books are inspired with a love of righteous- Thackeray. *Vanity Fair.*

[1] The new Professor was Sir James Stephen, author of *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*, and for many years Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office.

1847-49.

ness, and a hatred of iniquity. He was the lay preacher of his age. *Mary Barton*, also published in 1848, described with singular power and exquisite tenderness the struggles and sufferings of the working classes in Lancashire before the adoption of Free Trade. The author, Mrs. Gaskell, wife of a Unitarian minister at Manchester, at once made her mark as a writer of fiction worthy to be put on the same shelf with Jane Austen's and Maria Edgeworth's. *Mary Barton* was only the first of a series in which all lovers of literature continued to rejoice.

Mrs. Gaskell. *Mary Barton.*

In a very different sphere, a sphere which is as much scientific as literary, John Stuart Mill began to exercise at this time an influence which steadily grew for the next quarter of a century. His *Principles of Political Economy*, published in 1848, are avowedly grounded upon the system of Ricardo. The extreme and repulsive dryness of Ricardo's methods severely limited the circulation of his book. His doctrines had already been put into a popular shape by De Quincey, and to some extent illustrated by Harriet Martineau's tales. But Mill expounded them with a fulness, an eloquence, and a fervour which made them for the first time attractive and accessible to all. Mill is indeed the standing instance to prove that political economy has no connection with unsympathetic hardness of nature. He was the most sentimental of philosophers, and a passionate enthusiast in whatever cause he took up. The worst fault in his book is the dangerous and disastrous admission that protection may be beneficial to the nascent industries of a rising colony. The experience of New South Wales on the one side, and of Victoria on the other, has shown the precise opposite to be true. This was Mill's one economic heresy,

Mill's *Political Economy.*

as belief in the Navigation Laws was Adam Smith's. 1847–49.

The collapse of Chartism was followed by the efforts of the Christian Socialists to improve the condition of the poor by sanitary and co-operative methods. The Public Health Act of 1848, a measure for reforming the drainage of towns, was the first serious attempt to strike through legislation at the root of disease. Frederick Maurice, James Ludlow, Edward Mansfield, and Lord Goderich,[1] were among the first co-operators. But Charles Kingsley, whose best novel, *Alton Locke*, appeared in 1849, gave the greatest stimulus to the movement. Kingsley, who called himself Parson Lot, was a zealous Broad Churchman of the sporting, secular type. He knew little, and cared less, about theology. His aim was to make Christianity practical by bringing it to bear upon social abuses, and to show the working classes that the clergyman was their best friend. He was not, as he himself confessed, a clear thinker, and the moral reflections in his novels were apt to degenerate into rant. His philosophy was poor and shallow. But he was a real poet, especially distinguished as a writer of ballads, and he had a forcible style which impressed even where it did not persuade. Few men of his time, lay or clerical, did so much as Kingsley for the material good of the poor. His parishioners at Eversley adored him, and the pick of the working classes trusted him as a genuine champion of their rights. His passion for the country, and especially for trout-streams, inspired both his poetry and his prose. But he was a child of the age, always full of the moment, and *Alton Locke* deals chiefly with the Chartism of the towns. It might almost have been written by Carlyle, so full is it of his

Christian Socialism.

Charles Kingsley.

[1] Afterwards the Marquess of Ripon.

1847–49. phraseology and teaching. Kingsley, however, to do him justice, never forgot that he was a clergyman, though he did smoke black pipes and wear black ties. He aimed at converting the masses to Christianity, and not an unorthodox Christianity, by taking up their cause and doing them good. His ballads and lyrics, which have outlived *Alton Locke*, ought not to obliterate the memory of what he did for the health and comfort of humble homes.

Max Müller. Max Müller's translation of the Rig-Veda, the sacred book of the Hindoos, which also appeared in 1849, marks an epoch in that comparative study of religions which has since so thoroughly penetrated the theological atmosphere of Europe. The translator, even then a scholar of European reputation, was a young German who came early to England, and made Oxford his home. His latitudinarian views for a time impeded his progress, and prevented him obtaining the Professorship of Sanskrit, which, however, was bestowed upon a thoroughly competent man, Monier Williams. But another Professorship was founded for him, and for many years he lectured on Comparative Philology to an audience far wider than that which crowded his lecture room. It could not have been expected that the Rig-Veda would be popular. But the total failure of *The Strayed Reveller and other Poems, by A.*, is more difficult to understand. This volume, the first of Matthew Arnold's, though it contained "Mycerinus," "The New Sirens," "The Forsaken Merman," "Resignation," and some of the author's best sonnets, made no mark whatever, and was almost immediately withdrawn from circulation. At that time there was a presumption against poetry which a new poet had gradually to overcome.

Matthew Arnold.

1848 is a famous epoch in the history of British

art, for it is the year in which the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was founded by Millais, Rossetti, and Holman Hunt. Millais' beautiful picture of Ferdinand and Isabella, exhibited in the Academy of 1849, is thoroughly characteristic of this school, which also included Ford Madox Brown and Edward Burne Jones. Its principles consisted in a reversion to the natural and primitive style of the early Italian school, culminating in Botticelli, which Perugino, and Raphael, and their successors were thought to have perverted. The prophet of the brotherhood was John Ruskin, whose *Seven Lamps of Architecture* bears the date of 1849. Ruskin was then at the height of his powers, and on the threshold of his fame. As a writer of flowing, ornate English he had no living rival, and though he was always dogmatic, he was in those days not merely capable of argument, but a vigorous reasoner. In architecture he was the champion of Gothic against Renaissance, and especially of Italian Gothic, though he was also a great admirer of Byzantine and Romanesque. An age whose highest architectural genius was represented by the new Houses of Parliament required to be taught the essential difference between good architecture and bad. This elaborate Palace is the joint work of Barry, who designed it, and of Pugin, who carried out the details under Barry's supervision. The cost was the object of many pertinacious attacks from Hume, Cobden, and other economists. That aspect of the question has lost its interest now, and the Houses of Parliament have become so familiar that they are seldom criticised. Seen from a distance, they are imposing enough, and the interior of the House of Lords has a wealth of colour which attracts the eye. But the Gothic of Barry and Pugin is ill-fitted to sustain comparison with Westminster Abbey, or West-

1847–49. The P.-R. B.

Ruskin's *Seven Lamps.*

The new Houses of Parliament.

1847–49. minster Hall, or that noble cloister of the fifteenth century which survived the fire of 1834 only to become a cloak-room and smoking-room for the House of Commons. If Ruskin taught nothing else, he enforced the memorable lesson that the style of a building should be adapted to the use which it serves. "The Palace of Westminster" is a conventional term. The Sovereign does not live there; but Parliament does sit there. It is a place of business, not an abode of pomp, and a severe simplicity, such as distinguishes the Parliament House at The Hague, would have become it far better than an imitation of Milan Cathedral. The "great hall of William Rufus," with the rafters of Richard the Second, is the real glory of Westminster, and it is not surpassed in the world.

Chloroform. To this period belongs a great invention, perhaps the most beneficent result of scientific inquiry. The first operation under chloroform was performed in 1847. Ether and nitrous oxide gas had been used by dentists a few months earlier. But the amount of torture from which Sir James Simpson saved the human race can neither be expressed in words nor conceived in thought. Students of final causes may perplex themselves by asking why the existence and value of anæsthetics were hidden for so many ages from the knowledge of mankind. It is more reasonable, and more practical, to connect the adoption of physical discoveries for the relief of human misery with the growth and prevalence in modern England of kindlier instincts than our ancestors possessed. The due provision and proper regulation of public asylums, largely due to the efforts of Lord Ashley, dates from the fifth decade of the nineteenth century. With improved treatment of the insane, progress was made in the treatment of the sick. Medical students of

Dick Sawyer's type disappeared, and hospitals gradually began to fulfil their true purpose by providing in nourishment as well as in surgery what only the rich could obtain at their own homes. 1847-49.

CHAPTER X

LORD PALMERSTON'S TRIUMPH

1850.

The confusion of parties.

It is a popular delusion that England has been governed since the Reform Act of 1832 by the alternative preponderance of parties, sometimes called the swing of the pendulum. There was no swing of the pendulum between 1841 and 1868. Governments were kept in power by a combination of groups until the working classes obtained the franchise. The Protectionists were active and adroit, but they never recovered from the collapse of 1846. The Parliamentary Reformers were eager and enthusiastic, but for many years their efforts were unavailing. Early in 1850

Feb. 28.

Mr. Hume, the most persistent of them, was beaten by 242 votes to 96 when he tried to introduce a Bill for household suffrage, ballot, and triennial Parliaments. He overloaded his truck. But he made an impression on Lord John, who explained that his famous doctrine of finality was anything

Lord John's repudiation of finality.

rather than final. The least final things in politics were the Budgets of Sir Charles Wood. In 1850, with an estimated surplus of a million and a half, he proposed to repeal the duty on bricks, and to lower the value of the stamps on the sale or mortgage of real property. The removal of the brick duty had been suggested by Sir Robert Peel in the debate on Mr. Disraeli's motion, and on the Stamp Bill the Government were compelled

by successive defeats to go much further than they intended. A motion of Lord Duncan's for the repeal of the window tax was only rejected by a majority of 3, and this odious survival of the French war was doomed. 1850.

Another private member, William Ewart, M. P. for Dumfries, a man foremost in many wise projects of social and political reform, carried in the same session a modest measure of incalculable benefit to the people. This Bill allowed the local authorities of towns with a population of ten thousand, subsequently lowered to five, to levy a halfpenny rate, subsequently raised to a penny, for the building and maintenance of free libraries. The Government supported Mr. Ewart, and his Bill met with little opposition, except from that quaint oddity, Colonel Sibthorp, who declared that he always hated reading, "even when he was at Oxford." It passed through the House of Lords in absolute silence, and attracted very little attention at the time. Manchester was the first town to take advantage of it. The free library there was opened in September 1852 by Dickens, Thackeray, and Bulwer. The movement made slow progress at first, and it was not till 1855 that newspapers could be bought, as well as books, at the expense of the ratepayers. There are now about four hundred and fifty libraries supported by the rates, and the number of volumes they contain is estimated at six millions and a half.

For Ireland in 1850 the Government introduced two measures, and carried one. They carried a Reform Bill, required by the melancholy fact that the famine had so diminished the population as to make the constituencies absurdly small. They originally proposed an eight pound franchise. But the Lords raised it to fifteen, and a compromise of twelve was finally accepted. A more ambitious

The Irish Reform Bill.

1850.

Proposed abolition of the Lord-Lieutenancy.

measure was a Bill for the abolition of the Lord-Lieutenancy. This Bill had a curious, if not a singular history. Lord John Russell urged it upon the House of Commons with all the energy of conviction. He went back to George the Third, and proved that that least innovating of monarchs was opposed to the retention of the Viceregal Court. He dwelt upon the anomalous relations of the Lord-Lieutenant to his Chief Secretary, who might be his master's master and a Mayor of the Palace. There were in those days three secretaries of State, for Home, Foreign, and Colonial Affairs respectively. Lord John proposed that there should be a fourth, a Secretary of State for Ireland. Sir Robert Peel, while holding that the Home Secretary might undertake the administration of Ireland, supported the abolition of the Lord-Lieutenancy, and the second reading of the Bill was carried on Waterloo Day by 295 votes against 70. That was the end of it. It never reached the stage of Committee, and was never brought in again. There is no other modern example of a Government Bill with such an immense preponderance of opinion in its favour being so completely extinguished. The Duke of Wellington is understood to have disliked the Bill, on the ground that it would deprive the Crown of direct control over the Irish forces, and to have infected the Court with his dislike. But perhaps the reputation acquired by Lord Clarendon had even more to do with the matter. Lord Clarendon was not a popular Viceroy. He had no sympathy with Irishmen, or with Catholics. But he was inflexibly just, and his conduct in removing Lord Roden, the leader of the Orange party in the north, from the commission of the peace for encouraging the turbulent procession at Dolly's Brae met with almost universal approval. Lord Stanley, though he did not dare to move a vote of censure, criticised

this action of the Viceroy's in the House of Lords. But Lord Clarendon, with much reluctance, came over to vindicate himself, and his vindication was triumphant. Lord Stanley, as Sancho Panza says, came for wool, and went away shorn. 1850.

A Bill of much more practical importance was carried through the House of Commons by Lord Ashley, and became law. The Factory Act of 1847 was supposed to have prevented the employment of women and young persons for more than ten hours in the twenty-four. But a flaw was discovered in the drafting of the Act, which was an early example of legislation by reference.[1] It amended Sir James Graham's Act of 1844, which allowed factories to be open from half-past five in the morning till half-past eight in the evening. Most employers, and all the best of them, were loyal to the spirit of the new law. But a few held out, and by a system of relays, made it impossible for the inspectors to ascertain whether a woman or young person was employed for more than ten hours or not. The magistrates refused to convict, and at length a case was stated for the Court of Exchequer. The Court of Exchequer was then dominated by Mr. Baron Parke, afterwards Lord Wensleydale, a judge of great learning and still greater subtlety, who had the reputation of doing more injustice according to law than any of his colleagues on the Bench. The Court decided in favour of the recalcitrant manufacturers, holding that laws in restraint of trade must be construed strictly, though, as Lord Ashley put it, they might better have held that laws for the protection of the weak should be construed liberally. In consequence of this judgment, delivered early in the year, Lord Ashley introduced an amending Bill, The Factory Act Amendment Bill.

[1] Reference to the words of previous statutes. Few methods are more confusing.

1850. March 14.

which the Government supported, and took into their own hands. Sir George Grey, whose moderation was his nearest approach to a vice, proposed a compromise, which, however, was upon the whole a satisfactory one, and one that Lord Ashley did well to accept. The Home Secretary suggested, and it was agreed, that factories might be open from six in the morning till six in the evening, with intervals of not less than an hour and a half for meals. This meant a ten hours and a half day, which did not satisfy the enthusiasts, and drew down upon Lord Ashley much unmerited abuse. He felt it keenly. A sincere philanthropist, indifferent to political office, for which he was pre-eminently fit, lavishing his time, and what little money he had, upon the moral and material welfare of the masses, he had, despite the intensity of his religious convictions, a thoroughly human love of popularity. But on this occasion he sacrificed it to the good of those who abused him, and he was rewarded by the smooth progress of the measure through both Houses of Parliament. Mr. Bright opposed it in a narrow and selfish spirit as the result of "ignorance and sentimentalism." Lord John Manners supported it with a vigour and an eloquence which entitled him to future distinction. Attempts to enlarge the Bill by including regulations for the labour of children failed, and stood over for the future. But the Factory Act of 1850 is the foundation of a beneficent and enlightened code. That code has since been developed with a thoroughness and minuteness of which even Lord Ashley did not then dream, to the infinite advantage of the working classes, but without the smallest detriment to trade.

Sabbatarianism and the Post Office.

Lord Ashley's other achievement during the session of 1850 was less successful, and procured him, if possible, still more abuse. On the 30th

of May he moved and carried in the House of Commons a resolution against the delivery of letters on Sunday, thus extending to all parts of the United Kingdom the practice which already prevailed in London. The Government through the Chancellor of the Exchequer opposed the motion. But their control over the House was feeble, and they were beaten on a division by 93 votes to 68. This was a great triumph for Lord Ashley, a rigid Sabbatarian, who confounded Sunday with the Sabbath. But considering the smallness of the numbers, a strong Government would have found some way of surmounting the difficulty. The Government of Lord John Russell took the high constitutional line. They disapproved of the change, and acknowledged all its inconveniences. But the representatives of the people had spoken, and it was the duty of the executive to obey. So the public went without their Sunday letters, until gradually a groundswell of grumbling was blown into a storm of protest. Lord Ashley became the most unpopular man in England, except perhaps Lord Clanricarde, the Postmaster-General. At length a way was found, and on the 9th of July Mr. Locke, Member for Honiton, the railway engineer, carried a motion for inquiry. The Commissioners speedily reported that the nuisance was intolerable, and the Government reverted to the custom of former times. 1850.

So long as he remained a member of Lord John Russell's administration, Lord Palmerston pursued with characteristic vigour and pertinacity a foreign policy of his own. He consulted his colleagues as little as possible, and was far from regular in his communications with the Queen. He had the Court against him, and was distrusted by the Cabinet. With the exception of Sardinia, Switzerland, Turkey, Belgium, and Denmark, foreign Palmerston's triumph.

1849. Powers abhorred him. But among the middle classes he was the most popular man in the Government, and his jaunty cocksure attitude was singularly effective in the House of Commons. It must, however, be borne in mind that his flippancy was a calculated pose, and his levity a trick of manner. He was in truth a most laborious Minister, clear-sighted, though not far-sighted, profoundly versed in the secrets of European diplomacy, and always knowing his own mind. His beautiful handwriting, which Mr. Gladstone used to say was the one perfect specimen of calligraphy he had ever known, was a faithful illustration of the clearness and firmness with which he formed his own opinions, and adhered to them. His policy has been already described as one of general interference in the affairs of Europe. It cannot be appreciated without reference to the peculiar circumstances of the time. Europe was still governed by the Treaty of Vienna. Mr. Canning, in one of the most famous passages of his noble oratory, has compared the state of the Continent after the fall of Napoleon with the reappearance of ancient landmarks after the subsidence of a mighty flood. For the preservation of those landmarks the great Powers represented at Vienna had made themselves collectively responsible. Palmerston accepted the responsibility on behalf of England with the reservation that she should discourage despotism, and favour constitutional government. He repudiated altogether the doctrine of non-intervention. England was to him not an isolated Power, not the centre of a Colonial system, but an active and leading member of the European family. He cared very little for the Colonies. They had grown up, so to speak, since his time. India did not much concern him. But he was determined to assert the position of his

Palmerstonian intervention.

country as the first of nations, and the example to all others. The events of 1848 and 1849 had greatly strengthened him in this respect. For they had shown that England was enabled by the stability of her ordered freedom to weather a storm which had deposed an Emperor, destroyed a Monarchy, driven a Crown Prince into temporary exile, and sent the most renowned statesmen of the old school, Prince Metternich and M. Guizot, to wander painfully in foreign lands. Next to England in the success with which she had stood against revolution was the little kingdom of Belgium, and Belgium was Palmerston's pet child. In Italy his policy had so far proved a failure, and in Spain his meddlesome interference had been futile. But he had saved Switzerland from disruption; he had preserved Schleswig-Holstein to Denmark; and his protection of the Hungarian refugees had won for him the enthusiastic admiration of the Radicals. Greece was destined to be the climax of his fame. But before we consider the blockade of the Piræus, and the momentous consequences which followed it, a word must be said about the attack made in the House of Commons upon the employment of a British squadron off the coast of Africa for the suppression of slavery. This attack was a false move on the part of the Opposition, and though Palmerston was silent in the debate, he reaped no small advantage from it. The gentlemen who had been so anxious on purely philanthropic grounds to impose a protective and prohibitive duty upon sugar grown by slaves grudged the money spent in directly preventing the most odious form of traffic ever invented. They made a deliberate attempt to overthrow the Cabinet for the sake of this miserable economy, and they enlisted in their service the eloquence of Mr. Gladstone, whose zeal against negro slavery was always cool. The Prime

1850.

The African slave-trade.

1850. Minister, however, felt himself on strong ground, and took a bold line. The motion, which stood in the obscure name of Mr. Hutt, was set down for the 19th of March 1850. On that morning Lord John Russell assembled his party, and told them in plain language that if he were beaten he should resign. He stood, he said, upon the principles of Mr. Fox, and he would not desert them. In the House of Commons he rode the high horse, and rode it successfully. The motion was defeated by 78 votes, and the squadron was maintained. The voice was Russell's voice, but the hand was the hand of Palmerston.

The case of Mr. Finlay and Don Pacifico. The Duke of Wellington, who called the battle of Navarino an untoward event, lived to witness the occurrence in the same quarter of an event still more untoward. On the 18th of January 1850, Admiral Sir William Parker, instructed by the Foreign Office through the Admiralty, proclaimed a blockade of the Piræus. Greek ships were prevented from leaving, and were detained as hostages. The pretexts for this high-handed proceeding, which nearly involved the whole of Europe in war, were various. Several British subjects, of whom the most respectable was Mr. Finlay, and the most notorious was Don Pacifico, had made claims upon the Greek Government for redress which had not been granted. Mr. Finlay was not then known as the illustrious historian of the country which he made his home, but as a "canny Scot" with a grievance against the King of Greece. The King had taken for the gardens of his palace some land upon which Mr. Finlay's house stood. He did not propose to take it for nothing, but he considered, or his Ministers considered, that Mr. Finlay's demands were altogether preposterous. They were, in fact, enormously in excess of what he had paid for the land, and considerably in excess of what

any arbitrator would have given him. David Pacifico was a Portuguese Jew, born in Malta, and therefore a British subject. His house had been wrecked and gutted by an Athenian mob, who were furious because, owing to the presence of a Rothschild in the town, they had not been allowed their annual amusement of burning Judas Iscariot at Easter. The man was undoubtedly entitled to compensation. But the amount for which he asked, and the items of which his bill was composed, were so ludicrously extravagant as to provoke universal laughter. A still more fatal point, however, both in his case and in Mr. Finlay's, was that they appealed to Great Britain for satisfaction without having first applied to the Greek courts for damages. It was idle to say that they would not have got justice. If they had failed, then would have been the time for diplomatic action. Even if Mr. Finlay could not have sued the King in person, he could have sued the Government, who actually proposed arbitration. The leaders of the wholly unjustifiable assault upon Pacifico's house were perfectly well known, and some of them were men of substance. There were no doubt good reasons why David Pacifico should have shrunk from entering a court of law. He must have felt that the part of it appropriate to him was not that in which parties or witnesses sit. He was strongly suspected of forgery, and one of the demands which he had the impudence to make upon the Greek authorities was for the loss of papers proving the liability of Portugal for a debt declared by the Portuguese Minister to be fraudulent. Although he gave himself out to be a pauper, and declared that he had not an obolus at the bank, the furniture and linen included in his bill of costs were of the most luxurious and magnificent kind. Mr. Finlay had not this paltry scoundrel's excuse for avoiding the

1850.

Pacifico's character.

1850. ordinary tribunals. He simply wanted to get as much as he could, and he thought he could get the most through Lord Palmerston.[1] Besides these claims there were grievances of Ionians resident in Greece which were serious enough if true, and which concerned Great Britain because the Ionian Islands were then under British protection. But no sufficient investigation was made into the truth of the charges, many of which were afterwards shown to be unfounded. The crew of a boat belonging to H. M. S. *Fantome* had been by some stupid mistake arrested, and they had suffered the loss of their boat-hook. To these complaints Lord Palmerston added a pretence that the two small islands of Cervi and Sapienza were British, not Greek. They had been treated since 1830 as Greek. But, Greek or British, they were uninhabited, and were not worth a five pound note between them.

Other grievances.

In despatching his orders to Sir William Parker, Lord Palmerston had reckoned without France and Russia, who were, with England, the joint guarantors of Greek independence. France offered, through M. Drouyn de Lhuys, the French Ambassador in London, to mediate between the two Powers. The offer was accepted, and Baron Gros was sent to Athens to confer with the British

Feb. 5.

French offer of mediation accepted.

[1] Sir Spencer Walpole (*History of England*, iv. 578), contradicting Sir Theodore Martin (*Life of the Prince Consort*, ii. 270) and Mr. M'Carthy (*History of Our Own Times*, ii. 43), argues that neither Mr. Finlay nor Pacifico could have appealed to the courts of law. His reasons are that Pacifico could not bring an action against a crowd; that when the King took Mr. Finlay's land he was an absolute monarch; and that courts set up under the Constitution of 1843 would not inquire into events which happened before that date. It has been stated in the text that among the mob who sacked Pacifico were well-known Athenians who could certainly have been made liable in substantial sums. The point about the jurisdiction of the courts was raised by Finlay himself. But the Greek Government repudiated it and Mr. Gladstone tore it to pieces in the House of Commons. If the Greek courts had refused to do justice, a case for diplomatic remonstrance would have arisen. They did not refuse, because they were not asked.

Minister, Mr. Wyse. Early in March Russia took a much stronger, and a much more disagreeable step. Count Nesselrode addressed to Lord Palmerston, through Baron Brunnow, a very strong despatch, protesting against the coercion of small States by the maritime power of England. There is much truth and much justice in this document, to which Palmerston sent a very mild and conciliatory reply. The mission of Baron Gros was a failure, and the failure was Palmerston's fault. The Baron, whose good faith was unquestionable, found that Pacifico's Portuguese claims were moonshine, and that in his other claims there was much exaggeration. By arrangement in London between Palmerston and Drouyn de Lhuys joint instructions were to be sent for a settlement of the whole case. Baron Gros received his instructions. Mr. Wyse did not. Thereupon, in May, General Lahitte, the Foreign Minister of the French Republic, recalled M. Drouyn de Lhuys, and Mr. Wyse proceeded, with the assistance of Sir William Parker, to enforce payment from Greece. A diplomatic rupture with France seemed imminent. But Lord Normanby was not withdrawn from Paris, and ultimately the terms which Palmerston had conceded to Drouyn de Lhuys were adopted by the British Government.

1850.

Russia's protest.

Misunderstanding with France.

At this moment the relations of Palmerston with his colleagues were strained almost to the breaking point. Knowing very well that Drouyn de Lhuys had been recalled, he allowed, or rather requested the Prime Minister and the President of the Council to say that he had not. The next day they had the pleasure of seeing themselves contradicted and refuted in the French Chamber by General Lahitte. But long before this critical date, when the Russian Ambassador refused to attend Palmerston's dinner for the Queen's Birth-

Palmerston and his colleagues.

May 16.

1850. day, the Foreign Secretary and the Cabinet had been at daggers drawn. The "Greville Memoirs" teem with evidence of this fact; but a single extract will suffice. Writing on the 14th of February 1850, Greville says: "This Greek question is the worst scrape into which Palmerston has ever got himself and his colleagues. The disgust at it here is universal with those who think at all about foreign matters: it is past all doubt that it has produced the strongest feelings of indignation against this country all over Europe, and the Ministers themselves are conscious what a disgraceful figure they cut, and are ashamed of it. Labouchere[1] came into my room yesterday, and let loose about it without reserve. He said it admitted of no excuse, and that John Russell, who alone could have prevented it, was inexcusable for not having done so; that it ought to have been brought regularly and formally before the Cabinet, who ought all to have known precisely what it was Palmerston proposed to do. Papers, indeed, were sent round in boxes, and Palmerston defended himself on this ground, and asked why they did not read them; but (said Labouchere) how was it possible for men who had large departments with a vast deal of business of their own to read all the papers which were brought round in circulation? They neither did nor could." This is a miserable excuse, and Palmerston's defence, as against the Cabinet, was perfectly sound. But at the same time there can be no doubt that his colleagues were at this period highly exasperated with him, that they considered he had passed the bounds, and that they were resolved to rid themselves of him once for all. The Queen and Prince Albert were only waiting for the signal. Lord John Russell was constantly being pressed to take some decisive step by

[1] President of the Board of Trade.

Lord Clarendon, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Grey, and his own brother, the Duke of Bedford, whose extensive correspondence included the Court. Lord John was to take the Foreign Office himself, thus anticipating the precedent made by Lord Salisbury a quarter of a century afterwards. But Palmerston was saved by the Opposition. Lord Stanley gave notice that he would move a vote of censure in the House of Lords, and in Bulwer Lytton's phrase "languid Johnny turned to glorious John." The Prime Minister was by instinct a fighting man, and, thus challenged, he made Lord Palmerston's cause his own.

1850.

Palmerston saved by the Opposition.

To raise the question in the House of Lords was a blunder in tactics, which has never been adequately explained. It was probably due in part to Lord Palmerston's popularity with the House of Commons, and in part to Lord Stanley's imperfect sympathy with Mr. Disraeli. After having been several times postponed at the request of the Government, who pleaded the danger of disturbing the negotiations with France, Lord Stanley's motion was made on the 18th of June. Lord Stanley could make even a bad case seem a good one, and this case was a very good one indeed. Accordingly he delivered a speech of remarkable eloquence and power. In the beautifully perspicuous language of which he was a master, and with the sarcastic irony in which he excelled, he cut Palmerston's Greek policy to pieces, and exposed it to the ridicule of the House. No real answer was made. Lord Lansdowne's perfunctory reply was wretchedly weak. It was the speech of a man who agreed with the Opposition, and disagreed with his own colleagues. Lord Aberdeen, in a grave, dignified, and temperate address, enforced the conclusions of Lord Derby. Lord Canning highly distinguished himself on the same

The vote of censure in the Lords.

1850.

side. Lord Brougham, who was always afraid of offending Lord Palmerston, added nothing to the strength of the attack. But the weight of argument was all one way, and to the weight of argument was added the weight of numbers. As the morning sun shone into the House of Lords, the tellers announced that the Contents exceeded the Not Contents by 37. But the victory was a Pyrrhic one. The terms of the motion[1] were in one respect unfortunate. They were capable of being interpreted to mean that Englishmen must submit to the laws of any country in which they resided, however iniquitous those laws might be. They played into Palmerston's hands, and he must have chuckled when he read them.

Defeat of the Government.

The Cabinet at once met and decided not to resign. That their decision was constitutionally sound nobody would now dispute. The assent of the Lords is necessary to all legislation. But they have not the power of the purse, and therefore have no control over the Executive Government. To resign on the defeat of the Navigation Bill would have violated no precedent or usage, though it would have been unwise. To resign on Lord Stanley's resolution would have been a betrayal of popular rights. On the 20th of June Lord John Russell, in reply to Mr. Roebuck, plainly declared the course of the Government. Quoting a precedent of 1710, and another of 1833, he announced that the Cabinet would remain in office, and would not alter their policy to please

The decision of the Cabinet.

[1] "That while the House fully recognises the right and duty of the Government to secure to Her Majesty's subjects residing in foreign States the full protection of the laws of those States, it regrets to find, by the correspondence recently laid upon the table by Her Majesty's commands, that various claims against the Greek Government, doubtful in point of justice or exaggerated in amount, have been enforced by coercive measures against the commerce and people of Greece, and calculated to endanger the continuance of our friendly relations with other Powers."

the House of Lords. He concluded by saying, with great emphasis, and amidst loud applause, "My noble friend is not the Minister of Austria, nor the Minister of Russia, nor the Minister of France, but the Minister of England." It was a blunder in the circumstances to mention France. But the Czar at least had no right to be surprised, and this is the sort of declaration, as Lord John well knew, which always goes down with the House of Commons. To that House the Government had virtually appealed, and on the 24th of June Mr. Roebuck moved a general resolution in support of their foreign policy. This was a very adroit shifting of the issue. Pacifico and his bed-curtains were forgotten. The pathetic remonstrance of the Greek Premier, in which he invoked the chivalry of a strong nation to respect the rights of a weak one, fell into the background. Lord Palmerston was enabled to come forward as the champion of constitutional liberty throughout the Continent of Europe. The debate which followed lasted four nights, and was one of the most brilliant to which the House of Commons ever listened. It contained the finest of all Lord Palmerston's speeches, the first great speech of Mr. Gladstone, the last speech of Sir Robert Peel, and the most elaborate of those forensic harangues, delivered successively at the Bar, in the Senate, and on the Bench, by the accomplished personage best known as Lord Chief Justice Cockburn. The most formidable, if not indeed the only serious part of the attack, was led by the Peelites, headed by Sir James Graham, though they were supported by Mr. Cobden and Sir William Molesworth. On the second night Lord Palmerston replied, with, as Greville says, "prodigious force and success." It was indeed a masterly speech. He rose at half-past ten. He sat down at half-past three, having spoken from

1850.

"The Minister of England."

The debate in the Commons.

Palmerston's great speech.

1850. the dusk of one day to the dawn of the next. "It made us all proud of him" was the verdict of his most illustrious opponent. He never came up to it, before or afterwards. Parliamentary oratory was not his strongest point, and he was at his best in the Foreign Office with his pen. But on that occasion he surpassed himself, and even at this distance of time it is impossible to read the great defence of the Minister at bay without a thrill of admiration. He was sober, restrained, powerful, unflinching. He entirely threw over Lord John Russell's plea that he was merely the Minister of England, and asserted the right of this country to promote the cause of constitutional government throughout Europe. He shattered the clearly false doctrine of the Lords that British subjects were only entitled to such protection as might be given them by the laws of the nation in which they resided. At great length, and with much minuteness, he vindicated his policy in Italy, in Hungary, and in Spain. He passed lightly and adroitly over his meek reply to Russia, and his tardy adhesion to the requirements of France. He taunted Lord Aberdeen with inconsistency in having protested against King Otho's dismissal of Sir Richard Church from the command of the Greek forces, and he proclaimed that his own moderate Liberalism was the one successful method of averting revolution. He had been accused of procuring the downfall of the French Monarchy. This gave him an opportunity of which he availed himself with a skill which amounted to genius. The French, he said, were a brave and high-spirited people. If they thought that there was a foreign conspiracy against one of their Ministers, they would stand by him to the death. This passage, of which the dullest could not mistake the meaning,

was received with the sort of applause reserved by the House of Commons for rare and memorable occasions. In his peroration Palmerston was equally felicitous. He struck the popular note when he cited the old boast *Civis Romanus sum*, and claimed that wherever a British subject might be, the watchful eye and the strong arm of England would protect him against injustice and wrong. 1850. *Civis Romanus.*

The task of answering this speech fell to Mr. Gladstone, who performed it not only with eloquence, but also with that dauntless courage which never deserted him through life. He opposed to Palmerston's doctrine of a British citizenship equal with the Roman a theory of a very different kind. He dared to talk Christian doctrine in the House of Commons. "It would be a contravention of the law of nature and of God," he said, "if it were possible for any single nation of Christendom to emancipate itself from the obligations which bind all other nations, and to arrogate, in the forum of mankind, a position of peculiar privilege. And now I will grapple with the noble lord on the ground which he selected for himself, in the most triumphant portion of his speech, by his reference to those emphatic words, *Civis Romanus sum*. He vaunted, amidst the cheers of his supporters, that under his Administration an Englishman should be throughout the world what the citizens of Rome had been. What, then, Sir, was a Roman citizen? He was the member of a privileged caste: he belonged to a conquering race, to a nation that held all others bound down by the strong arm of power. For him there was to be an exceptional system of law; for him principles were to be asserted, and by him rights were to be enjoyed, that were denied to the rest of the world. Is such, then, the view of the noble lord as to the relation which is to subsist between England and other Gladstone's reply.

1850. countries?" Such was the view of the "noble lord," and it was shared by the people of England. Mr. Gladstone was on the unpopular side, and he knew it.

Cockburn's declamation. Far different was the attitude of Mr. Cockburn, who undertook the task of answering a really unanswerable speech. For mere cleverness, Mr. Cockburn's contribution to this memorable debate would be difficult, if not impossible, to surpass. He had all the qualifications of an orator and a special pleader, including a voice whose melodious richness was unimpaired to the day of his death. He had got up the Blue Book as well as a busy lawyer could, and, not caring two straws about the matter, he was more Palmerstonian than Lord Palmerston himself. The first part of his oration, chiefly consisting in abuse of the Greek Government, and in skilful play upon Sir James Graham's unlucky sneer at *nisi prius*,[1] was mere claptrap. The conclusion, in which the future Chief Justice attacked the combination of Peelites and Protectionists, was exceedingly adroit. The defeat of Mr. Roebuck's motion meant the resignation of the Government. Who would succeed it, and what would be the commercial policy of the new Administration? Mr. Gladstone had spoken as the representative of Lord Stanley in the House of Commons. Would he help Lord Stanley to revive the Corn Laws? The answer to these pointed and perfectly legitimate questions could not be given then, but it can be given now. If Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston had been beaten, they would have been succeeded by Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen. Peel would never have acquiesced in the formation of a Pro-

[1] Following several lawyers in debate, Sir James expressed the opinion that the House had had enough of *nisi prius*, meaning purely forensic argument.

tectionist Government. This is proved by the following passage in the *Peel Papers*.[1] "In 1850, not long before his death, walking home from the House of Commons with Mr. Cardwell, who lived next door to him, and repeating his determination to do anything rather than allow the renewal of the taxes on food, Sir Robert Peel was reminded by his friend and follower of the general belief that he had resolved under no circumstances to resume office. With a gesture habitual to him, pressing Mr. Cardwell's arm to his side, Sir Robert remarked, 'I never said so.'" 1850. Peel's willingness to take office.

Mr. Cockburn had had the assurance to claim for Mr. Roebuck's motion the support of Sir Robert Peel, whose "proconsular rank" he not ungraciously acknowledged.[2] Sir Robert brushed him aside in a few perfunctory sentences, and then, amid the profound silence of a crowded House, delivered his last message to the assembly of which he had so long been the most illustrious ornament. It is difficult in reading what Mr. Bright afterwards called "that most beautiful, that most solemn speech," to realise that the speaker had no premonition of his approaching end. For Sir Robert had never in his life delivered an address so fitting to be remembered in after ages by a civilised and Christian nation. From anything like an attack upon Lord Palmerston he most carefully abstained. But he laid down principles of foreign policy at direct variance with his, and Peel's rebuke of Palmerston.

[1] Vol. iii. p. 534.

[2] Mr. Cockburn's slashing and dashing speech had a personal and an almost immediate result. When it was made the Great Seal was in Commission, Lord Cottenham having resigned at the end of May, and been consoled, much to Brougham's disgust, with an earldom. In July the Commission was terminated in favour of Sir Thomas Wilde, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, who took his seat on the Woolsack as Lord Truro. Sir John Jervis, the Attorney-General, succeeded him; his place was taken by Sir John Romilly, Solicitor-General, and the new Solicitor-General was Sir Alexander Cockburn. *Sic itur ad astra.*

1850.

His memorable peroration.

enforced them with all the weight of his own singular authority. "Diplomacy," he said, "is a costly engine for maintaining peace, a remarkable instrument used by civilised nations for the purpose of preventing war. Unless it be used to appease the angry passions of individual men, and check the feelings which arise out of national resentment, it is an instrument not only costly but mischievous. If your application be to fester every wound, to provoke instead of soothing resentments, to place a minister in every Court of Europe for the purpose not of preventing quarrels, or of adjusting quarrels, but for the purpose of continuing an angry correspondence, and promoting what is supposed to be an English interest by keeping up conflicts with the representatives of other Powers, then I say that not only is the expenditure upon this costly instrument thrown away, but the great engine used by civilised society for the purpose of maintaining peace is perverted into a cause of hostility and war." After Peel's speech the chief interest of the debate was over. Lord John Russell followed him with a plucky and spirited defence of his colleague, in which he appealed to English sentiment, and did his best to represent Lord Palmerston as the victim of foreign intrigue. But in this theory he had no belief whatever, and the Minister whom he was defending was a Minister of whom he would have been only too glad to get rid. His most effective point was the contrast which he drew between Lord Stanley's activity in the Lords and Mr. Disraeli's inaction in the House where the Foreign Secretary sat. This brought up Mr. Disraeli, who laboured with indifferent success to show that he and Lord Stanley were entirely at one. At four o'clock in the morning the House divided, and the Government had a majority of 46. Palmerston's triumph

The victory of the Minister.

was complete. He had given the House of Lords a Roland for their Oliver. He was the most popular man in the country. The West Riding was restive at the speech of Mr. Cobden, and Manchester at the vote of Mr. Bright. Mr. Villiers, the Member for Wolverhampton, and Mr. Fox, the Member for Oldham, voted for the Government. A complimentary dinner was given to Palmerston at the Reform Club. He defied the Peelites, the Tories, the Cabinet, and the Court. 1850.

A few days after the division in the House of Commons there was ratified at Washington the treaty which he had negotiated through Sir Henry Bulwer with the United States to provide that any canal made between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans across Central America should be for the joint benefit and under the joint superintendence of the two Powers. The date of ratification was the most important in the American calendar, the 4th of July. The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty.

On the morrow of his victory Palmerston's greatest adversary was suddenly and unexpectedly removed. The day after his great speech Sir Robert Peel was thrown from his horse on Constitution Hill, and on the 2nd of July he died. No words can express the awe, astonishment, and grief which the news, first of his dangerous accident, and then of his death, excited among his countrymen. He was only sixty-two, in perfect health, with all his faculties unimpaired, at the height of his authority and his fame. "To Sir Robert Peel," says Mr. Parker,[1] "it was a great relief that the vote he had felt himself bound to give had not displaced [the Government]. Freed from anxiety on this point, content with the result, at ease in his own mind, as he walked home in the fresh summer dawn, he is said to have expressed satisfaction The death of Peel.

[1] *Peel Papers*, vol. iii. p. 344.

1850. that he had spoken in the interests of peace." It was not that he had any doubt of the evil effects which in his opinion Lord Palmerston's policy was bound to produce. But he had discharged his conscience, and he was relieved from the odious alternative of taking office himself, or seeing it taken by the Protectionists. The dispute with France had been amicably settled, and diplomatic relations had been renewed with Spain through that born statesman the first King of the Belgians. The greater part of Peel's career falls outside the scope of this work. The last four years of his life, with which alone it deals, were spent in a wholly disinterested devotion to the cause of his country and the welfare of mankind. Like Cobden, he was not only a true patriot, but an international man. He was mourned far beyond the limits of his native land. The Emperor of Russia wrote a letter of condolence to Lady Peel, in which he said that never had society more need of such men for its salvation. The National Assembly of the French Republic unanimously recorded their sense of the loss suffered by Europe. The friends of peace had indeed good reason to be sad. Their master was taken from their head. Peel never hesitated to uphold the dignity and the honour of England. His official life began during the great war against Napoleon. But he knew enough of war to appreciate its horrors; he had been bred under the most pacific of all great captains, and his sudden withdrawal from the scene was the loss of a moderating influence which had often soothed the animosities of rival States. The people of England mourned for Peel as they had mourned for no man since the death of Nelson. All animosities were extinguished in gratitude and sorrow. The giver of freedom and plenty was no more.

CHAPTER XI

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLONIES

FEW things are more remarkable in the history of the British race than the rise and progress of the Colonial system. From the least promising of all possible origins the penal settlements of Australia have grown into wealthy and flourishing States, united in a voluntary Federation under an imperial statute for the purposes of mutual intercourse and common defence. Except India, they are the most striking illustration of British power, as they are the most successful instance of British enterprise. Unlike Canada, which was conquered, and South Africa, which was bought, Australia was deliberately peopled with white immigrants, before whom the aborigines disappeared. Australia, indeed, as has been pointed out by Mr. Lucas in his *Historical Geography of the Colonies*, was a sort of compensation for the loss of the United States. Five years after American independence had been recognised by the Government of Lord Rockingham in 1783, the first shipload of convicts was despatched to Botany Bay. Voluntary settlers followed, and in fifty years there was in New South Wales, the parent colony, a free white population fit for the exercise of political rights. In 1842 New South Wales received a Legislative Council, and South Australia was promised one. A few years later, when Australia had further extended her in- 1850.

1850. habited area, and transportation, except to the west of the Continent, had practically ceased, Port Philip desired to be separated from New South Wales, and to become the independent colony of Victoria, so that in 1850 the Government of Lord John Russell found it necessary to introduce an enabling or constitutional Bill. The pioneer of Colonial self-government, Sir William Molesworth, had earned the gratitude of the Colonies and of the mother country by persistently urging the need for representative institutions, and the costly folly of paternal government from home.

The alleged neglect of the Colonies is not borne out by facts. Successive Secretaries of State interfered with them only too much, and the popular idea that "Mr. Mother Country Stephen" was himself the Colonial Office is a picturesque exaggeration. Sir James Stephen was a man of commanding ability, with an unusual gift for what is called talking people over. But Lord Stanley was never disposed to surrender any authority he possessed, and the year after Lord Grey's appointment Stephen resigned. "To govern our forty-three Colonies," said Molesworth in the House of Commons on the 25th of June 1847, "scattered over the face of the globe, inhabited by men differing in race, language, and religion, with various institutions, strange laws, and unknown customs, the staff of the Colonial Office consists only of five superior and twenty-three inferior functionaries, making in all twenty-eight persons for the government of forty-three colonies." The Colonial Office had of course nothing to do with India, which was partly under the East India Company and partly under the Board of Control, while Canada after 1838 governed herself. That Australia and Ceylon should be subject to the same Department was incongruous enough, and

Molesworth's strictures, so far as they go, are just. But no addition to the number of clerks in Downing Street would have solved the problem. There was only one solution, Molesworth's own, and that was to give the Colonies where the white races predominated the privilege with the responsibility of self-government. It was indeed a strange anomaly, which Molesworth did not fail to point out, that while an Englishman who emigrated to the United States enjoyed the same civil rights as if he remained at home, with a much wider franchise, an Englishman who went to Australia had no voice in the administration of the country, and was forced to associate with the criminal classes of the United Kingdom.[1] No wonder that the Colonies were in a condition of unrest, and threatened rebellion. No wonder that politicians who did not see the true way out of the difficulty should ask themselves in despair whether it was not better to let the Colonies go. But the Colonies did not want to go, and to abandon them would have been a contemptible abnegation of moral duty. If anything could have driven Australia to cut the painter it would have been Lord Grey's perverse behaviour in thrusting convicts upon Van Diemen's Land in 1848, after the Governor, Sir William Denison, had announced that the odious practice would be discontinued. Lord Grey drew a distinction between convicts sentenced to immediate transportation and "ticket-of-leave men" who had undergone part of their punishment in an English prison. But this sophistry only increased the indignation of the colonists, who refused to be satisfied, except in Western Australia, where labour was the one thing needful, until the accursed system had been abolished altogether. The obstinacy with which they clung to trans- 1850.

[1] Mrs. Fawcett's *Life of Molesworth*, p. 279.

1850. portation is a serious blot on the Colonial policy of the Whigs, which was otherwise for the most part wise and sound.

The growth and success of our Colonies owe much to the social and commercial enfranchisement with which the successive names of Whig and Liberal are associated. The Whigs saved Canada in 1838. They would have saved the whole of North America sixty years before if their power had been equal to their will. Australia owes much also to the need for expansion, and to the distress in England, from which flowed a stream of emigrants in the years immediately succeeding 1842. In the middle of the nineteenth century the Colonial Office, and especially the Secretary of State, were constantly subject not only to severe criticism, but to violent abuse.

Lord Grey. Lord Grey was the last man in the world to make an unpopular arrangement palatable. He had all his father's haughtiness, with none of his father's suavity; but he was a most capable administrator, and he never lacked the courage required for carrying his principles into effect. As a Whig, and in those days something more, he was a firm believer in self-government, and sincerely convinced, unlike Lord Brougham, that it was the best way of attaching the Colonies to the mother country. He repudiated with characteristic vehemence the idea of governing them from Downing Street. To give them the management of their own affairs was his object, and he succeeded in obtaining the support of the Cabinet. So important was the matter deemed to be that the Premier himself took charge of it in the House of Commons, and introduced, on the 8th of February, a Bill for conferring constitutional government upon Australia. Public opinion was uneasy about the Colonies. The fallacy that trade followed the

The Australian Constitution Bill.

flag had been long since exploded, and it was seen that the Colonies cost a great deal of money. There was a tendency among practical persons with material views to regard our Colonial possessions as a burden, and to think that the sooner we got rid of them the better. Lord John Russell, like Sir Robert Peel, repudiated this notion altogether. The only public men of note who held it were Cobden, Bright, and Disraeli. Yet it is the policy of Bright and Cobden, the policy of absolute non-intervention in Colonial affairs, which has made the Colonies not less enthusiastically loyal to the Crown than attached to their own virtual independence. Our bounden duty, said Lord John Russell, was to maintain the Colonial territories of the Sovereign as an integral part of her dominions, and for that purpose they must receive, wherever it was possible, a full measure of constitutional freedom. For Australia legislation was required, because it was intended to provide for contingencies, such as the revision of Colonial constitutions, with which the Queen's prerogative could not adequately cope. New South Wales had already a Legislative Council, which strongly objected to transportation. A similar Council was to be set up in Port Philip, now called Victoria, in Van Diemen's Land, now called Tasmania, and in South Australia. Two-thirds of the Councillors in each colony were to be elected, and the remaining third were to be nominated by the Governor. For settling a general tariff, for dealing with waste lands, and for other purposes, a joint assembly of all the Australian Colonies might be summoned. The fate of this most valuable provision will be seen hereafter. So far, Lord John Russell's proposals were reasonable and enlightened. When he came to speak of transportation, there was a sad falling off. This

1850.

The germ of Federation.

1850. Transportation.

method of peopling Australasia and South Africa with the worst and most hardened members of the criminal population at home had already, as we have seen, given serious trouble. The Cape of Good Hope had rebelled against it, and so had New South Wales. Lord John had to admit that convicts could not be forced upon British communities against their will, and that the *Neptune*, which the Cape colonists would not allow to land her cargo, had been sent to Van Diemen's Land. But he went on to argue that the question was one rather for the Home than for the Colonial Secretary, that something must be done with convicts, and that they could not be kept in England. For this last most arbitrary statement he cited the authority of the Judges, compared with whom the Bishops were radical reformers. Not much was said on the first reading of the Bill, except by Mr. Gladstone, who argued strongly in favour of a second Chamber in each colony. Mr. Gladstone's arguments are not difficult to answer, and in the abstract they are not very strong. It savours of pedantry to insist upon the immediate creation in a new community of elaborate mechanism upon which the experience of centuries has here set its seal. But Mr. Gladstone has been justified by events, for there is not at this moment a British colony without a second Chamber.

The principle of a second Chamber.

Feb. 18.

The Bill was read a second time without a division, and the Prime Minister conciliated the advocates of two Houses by pointing out that the Colonies would be able to adopt that system for themselves if they preferred it. This reduced the controversy to an academic level. To the arguments on both sides there was the plain, practical answer that if those who were most concerned approved of them, they would prevail. Sir

William Molesworth went further, and proposed a complete scheme of Colonial independence, with two Chambers, both elective. He was not merely for letting each colony frame its own constitution. He protested against the right of the Governor to reserve Bills for the consideration of the Secretary of State. In short, he would have united them to the mother country by nothing except the golden link of the Crown, and would have restricted the power of the Sovereign to the appointment of Governors. It may be said that Sir William Molesworth was in advance of his time, for that is substantially the law now. But, on the principle that a Colonial Legislature may pass a measure which affects the general interests of the Empire, the veto has always been retained, though it has fallen into almost entire disuse. On the 13th of May, when the Bill was read a third time, Mr. Gladstone moved to suspend it until the Colonies had been consulted. There was a great deal to be said for this motion, though it was defeated by a large majority. But the Government insisted that the Colonies desired the Bill, that they had expected it the year before, and that delay, if not positively dangerous, would be most unpopular. Lord John seldom showed more energy, or more dexterity, than in the conduct of this Bill, and he deserves to be remembered with gratitude by all who value the Colonial part of the British Empire. The most strenuous opponent of the Bill in the House of Lords was the Bishop of Oxford, who tried to defeat it for the year by referring it to a Select Committee. The Bishop's speech, eloquent as usual, was marked by bitter animosity against the Government, especially against Lord Grey.[1] Taking up a point, and

1850.

Sir William Molesworth's views.

Lord John's Colonial statesmanship.

[1] It appears from the private correspondence published by his son that he conceived himself to have lost the Archbishopric of Canterbury

1850.

a very bad point, made by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons, he urged that the Church of England required special safeguards in the Colonies. The Church of England in a self-governing colony occupies precisely the same position as all other religious bodies, and has no grievance. Lord Grey replied with adequate acerbity to this episcopal onslaught, and recommended the right reverend prelate, if he must speak on Colonial subjects, to make himself acquainted with them before he did so. Since Bishops are Peers of Parliament, their right to take part in political debates cannot be disputed, and Bishop Wilberforce was better qualified than most of his episcopal brethren to take part in them with effect. The amount of interest which the House of Lords then felt in Colonial affairs may be estimated by the fact that only 24 Peers voted with the Bishop, and only 37 against him. The Government, therefore, had a majority of 13. In Committee they were much more closely pressed, and were as nearly as possible defeated. Lord Stanley moved to strike out the clause which authorised the convention of a Federal Assembly, and in a House of forty-five Peers he was only beaten by one vote. The clause was subsequently dropped, and the Bill passed without it. Thus the germ of Australian Federation was sterilised by the Conservative party. Colonists were then regarded as dangerous and revolutionary Radicals, who had to be kept in their places. Lord Stanley, who had been Colonial Secretary himself, and had as such carried the Bill for the abolition of slavery, conceived that a union of colonies for legislative purposes would usurp the functions of Parliament. Lord Grey, in

The Church in the Colonies.

The loss of the Federation clause.

by protesting against the appointment of Dr. Hampden, and he never lost an opportunity of attacking Lord John Russell's Administration. — *Life of Bishop Wilberforce*, vol. i. pp. 496–497.

reply, cited the American constitution, with its Federal Congress and its State rights, its common postage, and its free trade within the Union. The analogy is by no means perfect, for the proper parallel to Washington is not Sydney, but London, and in those days no one dreamed of Imperial Federation. The strongest reason in favour of the proposal was the importance to Australia of a customs union. The strongest reason against it was that the Australians did not appear to desire it themselves. But the Government, though they placed their Bill on the Statute Book before the end of the year, cannot be acquitted of weakness. Having proposed the clause, they should have stuck to it, and not have shifted their responsibilities to the shoulders of the Opposition. Yet few legislative measures have proved so important as this to the power, influence, and welfare of the British race. Ceylon, where self-government was impossible,[1] continued to give trouble. On the 36th of July the Committee appointed by the House of Commons reported that Lord Torrington had been guilty of excesses, and recommended a Royal Commission. No Royal Commission was issued, but Lord Torrington was soon afterwards recalled. Colonial Governorships were too often in those days not so much the reward of merit as the solace of impecuniosity.

1850.

Lord Torrington's recall.

[1] Because the natives were unfit for it, and to place them under a small white minority would have been unjust.

CHAPTER XII

ENGLAND AND THE CHURCH OF ROME

1850.

Roman and Anglican Catholicism.

The year 1850 was a momentous one for the Church of England. It began with the Gorham case, and it ended with the Papal Aggression. The history of politics cannot be understood without the history of religion, and he forms a shallow estimate of human affairs who regards ecclesiastical disputes as unworthy of rational notice. The

The Gorham case.

appeal of the Reverend George Gorham was the first ecclesiastical cause or matter which came before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Lord Brougham, the author of the statute which created the Committee, declared that it had not been intended to give the new Court ecclesiastical jurisdiction. But as a matter of fact it was substituted for the old Court of Delegates, to which had been transferred the power of the Pope in the time of Henry the Eighth, and the Delegates, who were Privy Councillors, heard spiritual appeals. Mr. Gorham had been presented so far back as August 1847 to the living of Brampford Speke in the diocese of Exeter by Lord Chancellor Cottenham. He belonged to the evangelical school of theology, whereas the Bishop of Exeter, Dr. Philpotts, was a pronounced and aggressive High Churchman. Suspecting Mr. Gorham of "unsoundness," he put to him a number of questions, chiefly on the subject of infant baptism. It

is extremely doubtful whether the Bishop had the right to ask Mr. Gorham any questions at all. Mr. Gorham was not a candidate for ordination. He was a clergyman in priest's orders, duly presented to an ecclesiastical benefice by its legal patron, and the Bishop was therefore bound to institute him unless he could prove affirmatively that Mr. Gorham was either a heretic or an evil liver. Mr. Gorham, however, chose to answer the interrogatories, and his replies could of course be used as evidence against him. It must be admitted that they were somewhat obscure and evasive, wanting in straightforwardness, or at least in simplicity. They did not satisfy the Bishop, who refused to institute him. Gorham appealed to the Dean of the Arches, Sir Herbert Jenner-Fust, who decided in favour of the Bishop, holding that Gorham did not believe the doctrine of baptismal regeneration as defined in the formularies of the Church of England. Gorham then appealed to the Judicial Committee, before whom the case was argued by Turner[1] for the appellant, and Baddeley for the respondent, in December 1849. The Bishop of Exeter acknowledged the jurisdiction of the Court, which he afterwards denied, when he instructed counsel to represent him. On the 8th of March the judgment of the Committee was read by Lord Langdale, Master of the Rolls.[2] The judgment of the Court below was reversed, and the Bishop of Exeter was ordered to institute Mr. Gorham. This order he refused to obey, and Gorham was finally instituted by the Dean of the Arches, acting for the Archbishop of Canterbury. 1850.

[1] Afterwards Sir George Turner, Lord Justice of Appeal in Chancery.

[2] An account of the Gorham case, containing a full report of Lord Langdale's judgment, was published in 1852 by Messrs. Stevens and Morton.

1850. Lord Langdale's judgment was described by the great historian of the age, who heard it delivered, as worthy of Somers or D'Aguesseau. It is undoubtedly a calm, lucid, and impartial document, honourable to the tribunal from which it proceeded. The members of the Court, besides the Master of the Rolls, were Lord Campbell, Dr. Lushington, Baron Parke, Mr. Pemberton Leigh,[1] and Vice-Chancellor Knight-Bruce, who dissented from the rest of the Court. The Archbishops, Sumner and Musgrave, with the Bishop of London, Blomfield, attended to give their advice as Privy Councillors, but were not allowed to vote. The Archbishops agreed with the judgment. The Bishop of London did not.

The consequences of the final judgment.

It is difficult, though it is necessary, to understand the storm which this decision raised. The judgment itself deserves to be read as a model of the grave and temperate manner in which Judges should deal with theological questions. Their Lordships did not pretend to decide upon the truth or falsehood of any dogma. They did not say that Mr. Gorham was right, or that the Bishop of Exeter was wrong, in their respective views of baptismal regeneration. They simply held that on the evidence before them Gorham was not proved to have expressed any opinion at variance with the formularies of the Established Church. So much appears from their published reasons. But Mr. Greville, who was Clerk of the Council, and as such present at the private consideration of the judgment, is an authoritative witness to what passed behind the scenes. Dr. Lushington, a learned civilian, "said he had the greatest difficulty in making out what Gorham's doctrine really was, and he was much struck with the fact that in no part of the Bishop's pleadings did he say

The Judges in consultation.

[1] Afterwards Lord Kingsdown.

explicitly with what he charged him."[1] He also "pronounced a strong opinion against the Bishop, commenting in severe terms upon the nature of the examination, and setting forth the great danger to the peace of the Church which would result from a judicial declaration on their part that Gorham's opinions were clearly proved to be heretical." Still more to the point was the Archbishop of Canterbury, "who showed that opinions, if not identical with, yet very like, those of Gorham, had been held by a host of great and good churchmen," from Bishop Jewell to Mr. Simeon. The issue was really between two parties in the Church, the High and the Low. The High Church party did not succeed in driving a typical Low Churchman out of the pale. But no censure was passed upon their own doctrines and practices. To Mr. Gorham, as to Dr. Pusey, baptism was in the beautiful language of the Prayer Book "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." About the nature of that grace, and the mode of its reception, they differed, and the Judicial Committee considered that on so mysterious a subject their difference was legitimate. Bishop Wilberforce thought the judgment "vile." Lord Ashley, who was quite as orthodox as any Bishop on the Bench, thought it righteous and beneficent. It led, however, to some secessions from the Church of England, and to a shower of controversial pamphlets. Henry Edward Manning, Archdeacon of Chichester; Aubrey de Vere, the poet; James Hope-Scott, the Parliamentary lawyer, and several others, joined the Church of Rome as a refuge against the abomination of Erastianism. Many of the Bishops signed a protest against a decision stamped with the approval of the Archbishops, to one or other of whom they

1850.

Secession to Rome.

[1] "Greville Memoirs," 16th January 1850.

1850. all owed canonical obedience. The Bishop of Exeter brought upon himself much ridicule by affecting to excommunicate the Archbishop of Canterbury, a bright example of two Christian virtues, meekness and humility, in which Dr. Philpotts did not shine. Some influential laymen, including Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Sidney Herbert, were gravely perturbed, and talked of signing a declaration. Such a document was signed by all the seceders before their secession, and by some who did not secede. Mr. Herbert and Mr. Gladstone, however, remembering that they were Privy Councillors, drew back and withheld their names.

A protest.

Further litigation.

A more practical step was taken by attempting to obtain from each of the Superior Courts at Westminster in turn a writ of prohibition, which must virtually, though not nominally, if it had issued, have been addressed to the Queen in Council. For the Dean of the Arches had lost control of the proceedings, even if he possessed any authority independent of the Archbishop, whose officer he was. During the interval which elapsed between the arguments and the decision at Whitehall Lord Denman resigned, and Lord Campbell, who had been Chancellor of the Duchy since the formation of Lord John Russell's Cabinet, became Lord Chief Justice of England. He therefore had to pronounce upon the validity of his own jurisdiction. Lord Campbell was an excellent lawyer, and proved a most efficient Judge. But it was one of his weaknesses to regard himself as omniscient, and to treat his own books as historical authorities. Relying upon the entertaining collection of gossip which he called his *Lives of the Chancellors* for the reign of Henry the Eighth, he gave the High Churchmen a laugh at his expense, by confounding Lord Audley with Sir Thomas More. But on the main point, the absolute right

of the Judicial Committee to determine ecclesiastical appeals, he was supported in the affirmative by his colleagues in the Court of Queen's Bench, by the Court of Common Pleas, and by the Court of Exchequer. Having failed in the Courts, the High Churchmen tried Parliament, and the Bishop of London[1] introduced a Bill for transferring ecclesiastical jurisdiction from the Privy Council to the Upper House of Convocation, or, in other words, the Bishops. This learned and able Prelate did not always know his own mind as well as he knew the mind of Æschylus. Greville describes him as "half assenting and half dissenting, being on and off, by turns against Gorham and against the Bishop [Exeter], disagreeing with everybody and everything."[2] He made, however, a powerful and impressive speech on behalf of his Bill, concluding with a solemn peroration which moved even the House of Lords. But his Bill was rejected by a majority of 33. It really involved the principle of disestablishment, and Lord Lansdowne had an easy task in opposing it. The Prelates themselves were not unanimous and the Bishop of St. David's,[3] who never forgot that the Church of England includes the laity, exposed the dangers of bishop-made law. At the time of this debate Convocation had not met for the despatch of business since 1717. It was annually convened, and the clergy elected their proctors as often as Parliament was dissolved. But it could do nothing without the sanction of the Crown, and that sanction was systematically withheld. The revival of Convocation was a great object with Bishop Wilberforce, and the Gorham case redoubled his zeal. Against a Whig Government, however, he was powerless, and the Arch-

1850.

Attempted legislation.

Convocation.

[1] Dr. Blomfield.

[2] "Memoirs," 9th March 1850.

[3] Dr. Thirlwall.

1850. bishop of Canterbury was on the Ministerial side.

The Papal Aggression. But the Gorham case was soon forgotten in the convulsion that swept over England from the Flaminian Gate of Rome. The Papal Aggression, as it was called, and its consequences, cannot be regarded by Englishmen without feelings of shame. From the month of October 1850 to the month of August 1851 there was an almost incessant orgy of bigotry and intolerance. For the mass of the nation there was some excuse. The people of England are thoroughly Protestant, and they had been most wantonly provoked. The politicians who took advantage of honest prejudice for their own purposes had no excuse at all. Pope Pius the Ninth, having returned to Rome, under the protection of French bayonets, after two years of ignominious exile, abandoned all pretence of Liberalism, and appointed Cardinal Antonelli to be his Secretary of State. So far as England was concerned, his principal adviser was Nicholas Wiseman, a supple ecclesiastic and accomplished linguist, the central figure of that inimitable satire, *Bishop Blougram's Apology*. Dr. Wiseman passed for a man of the world, but he did not then understand that portion of the earth's surface with which it was his special business to be acquainted. He was responsible for the Papal Brief dated the 30th September, and he was the author of the still more startling Pastoral dated the 7th of October 1850. The Brief referred to "the Anglican schism," which was only the Pope's polite way of describing the Church of England. Dr. Wiseman's Pastoral, issued "out of the Flaminian Gate," announced a new policy in singularly audacious terms. The English Catholics had hitherto been governed by Bishops, or Vicars Apostolic, who had no territorial sees. Dr. Wise-

The Brief and the Pastortal.

man himself was styled "Bishop of Melipotamus in partibus infidelium." There was henceforth to be a new Catholic Hierarchy, consisting of one Archbishop and twelve Bishops, each with a diocese of his own. These dioceses were not to be identical with those of the Established Church, for that would have been a breach of the law. But they were to include the whole of England. Wiseman himself, elevated to the rank of Cardinal, was to be Archbishop of Westminster. In substance and in fact this arrangement concerned Roman Catholics alone. It had no legal validity, and the titles which it affected to confer were empty forms. No Protestant was affected by it. No Protestant had anything to do with it. Unfortunately it was announced in language of a peculiarly aggressive and irritating kind. "We govern," wrote Cardinal Wiseman, "and shall continue to govern, the counties of Middlesex, Hertford, and Essex." Of course he meant the Roman Catholics of those counties, but he did not say so. Recent conversions to Rome, more conspicuous than numerous, must have turned the heads of the Roman Hierarchy, and not of the Hierarchy alone. So thorough an Englishman as Dr. Newman, preaching at the consecration of Dr. Ullathorne, the new "Bishop of Birmingham," declared that "the people of England, who had for so many years been separated from the Church of Rome, were about of their own will to be added to the Holy Church." One must suppose that Newman meant something by these words, but what he can have meant it is hard to say. At all events these and similar utterances, so far from "adding" the English people to the Church of Rome, inflamed them almost to madness against the Papacy, and everything connected with it. This result, however deplorable, was not unnatural. But the tempest would have subsided as

1850. The new dioceses.

1850. quickly as it arose if the leading men in State and Church had done their duty by pouring oil upon the troubled waters. The Archbishop of Canterbury behaved, as always, with reason and moderation. But few of his colleagues, except Bishop Stanley, father of the more celebrated Dean, followed his example, and the worst offender of all was the Prime Minister, whose letter to Dr. Maltby, Bishop of Durham, commonly called the Durham letter, made things ten times worse than they were before. Lord John Russell had recently shown courage and wisdom by appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, despite the protests of Sir Robert Inglis, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Roundell Palmer. But the Brief and the Pastoral upset his balance. It was not in his case, as in the case of others, political calculation, or the love of popularity. He was a fiery Protestant and a staunch Erastian, hating alike the dogmas and the pretensions of Rome. He did not hesitate to denounce the one as "the mummeries of superstition," and the other as "endeavours to confine the intellect and enslave the soul." Turning upon the Puseyites, who had nothing to do with the Pastoral or the Brief, he stigmatised them as "unworthy sons of the Church of England." A private individual might have written this letter without incurring any just blame. The First Minister of the Crown should have remembered that millions of Roman Catholics were loyal subjects of the Queen, and that their religion was as much entitled to respect as his own. He soon repented his rashness, and found reason to remember the existence of a country called Ireland. But at the moment his success was complete, for he had hit the public between wind and water. His letter was dated the 4th of November. Next day it was thought patriotic and appropriate

The Durham Letter.

Nov. 4.

to burn the Pope and Cardinal Wiseman in effigy, as though they had been concerned in a plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament. At the Lord Mayor's dinner, on the 9th of November, Lord Chancellor Truro evoked enthusiastic applause by quoting from Shakespeare — 1850.

> Under my feet I'll stamp thy Cardinal's hat,
> In spite of Pope or dignities of Church.

The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge addressed the Queen in the same sense. Wiseman felt that he had gone too far, and wrote a very long epistle to the newspapers in his own defence. He took the obvious point that the ecclesiastical system of Roman Catholics was their own affair. He craftily contrasted the wealth and privileges of the Established Church with the poverty of the Dissenters, and their exclusion from the Universities. He taxed Lord John with having been informed through Lord Minto that the steps now taken were in contemplation. This assertion, of which the Tories made much use, Lord John and Lord Minto both denied. It appears that both statement and contradiction were made in good faith. Some papers on the subject had been given to Lord Minto, but he had not taken the trouble to read them. The incident did not increase his lordship's reputation, even as an amateur diplomatist. Wiseman defence. Lord Minto's alleged fo knowledg

Lord John Russell had not consulted his colleagues before sending his letter, and some of them, especially the Whig Nestor, Lord Lansdowne, highly disapproved of it. Lord Clarendon assured Greville that the harm it had done in Ireland "was not to be told." But it could not be recalled, and therefore it had to be followed up. The Law Officers of the Crown advised the Cabinet that a prosecution would almost certainly fail, and The Eccle astical Titles Bill

1850. it was therefore thought necessary to introduce a Bill, which was duly promised in the Queen's Speech. If the promise had not been given the Government would have been turned out. The Queen on her way to open Parliament was received with cries of "No Popery," and Cardinal Wiseman was mobbed in the streets. Accordingly, on the
1851. 7th of February 1851, Lord John Russell introduced the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, and over this miserable measure nearly the whole session was wasted. In its original shape it forbade the assumption of any episcopal or territorial title without the authority of Parliament, and the circulation in England of Papal Rescripts, under a penalty of a hundred pounds. If such a title were assumed, any bequest or donation of trust property to the person assuming it as such would be null and void. The first member of Parliament to raise his voice against this futile persecution was John Bright, who retorted upon the Church of England the epithets that the Bishops had been directing against the Church of Rome. Mr. Frederick Peel, taking a higher line, argued that it was vain to attack spiritual power with temporal weapons. Mr. Disraeli, who must have regarded the whole agitation with profound contempt, taunted the Government with having brought in a paltry Bill totally inadequate for its purpose. Nevertheless he voted for
Feb. 14. it, and only 63 members, including the Irish Catholics, had the courage to vote against it at the first stage.

Feb. 17. But the Government had fallen into a miserable state of weakness, and the Budget did little to strengthen them. Sir Charles Wood had a surplus of £1,800,000. He proposed that one million should be devoted to the payment of debt; that an inhabited house duty should be substituted for the window tax; that half the duty on foreign

timber should be taken off; that the coffee duty should be lowered; and that a grant-in-aid, estimated at a hundred and fifty thousand pounds, should be handed over to the local authorities for the maintenance of pauper lunatics. This grant was paltry in itself, and inconsistent with the case set up by Sir Charles Wood in the debate on Mr. Disraeli's motion, but it proved a most dangerous and fatal precedent. Three days after the introduction of the Budget the Government suffered an ignominious, almost a contemptuous, defeat. On the 20th of February Mr. Locke King, Member for East Surrey, moved for leave to introduce a Bill equalising the county and borough franchise at a uniform valuation of ten pounds. Mr. Locke King referred to the Irish Act of the previous year, and quoted statistics to prove that in England, as well as in Ireland, the number of county electors was diminishing. He was supported by Hume and Cobden. Lord John most unwisely opposed the motion. He was himself, as is now known, anxious to bring in a Reform Bill that year, and had reluctantly yielded to the majority of the Cabinet. He promised one for the following session. But that did not satisfy the Radicals, and the Protectionists deliberately stayed away. The result was startling. The Ayes to the right were 100. The Noes to the left were 52. The Bill was brought in, and the Government went out. But the Government came back again, and the second reading of the Bill was defeated by a large majority.

1851.

Repeal of the window tax

Defeat of the Whigs.

The confusion of parties was never more complete than on this 20th of February 1851. The Government had been upset by the Radicals, but the Queen could hardly send for Mr. Cobden. She sent for Lord Stanley, who was at once a Protectionist and a Reformer. Lord Stanley neither

1851.

Lord Stanley's refusal.

accepted at once, nor declined at once, the task entrusted to him. He said he would not undertake it until Lord John Russell had made an attempt to coalesce with the Peelites. This Lord John was ready enough to do. But the Peelites, of whom Lord Aberdeen was then the acknowledged head, had an insurmountable objection to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, and no Government which dropped that Bill could have lived a week. Lord John, Lord Aberdeen, and Lord Lansdowne were summoned to the Palace together. On other points they were substantially agreed. Their different interpretation of religious liberty kept them apart. Lord Stanley was sent for again, and told that the combination he had suggested was impossible. He then tried the Peelites himself, offering places in the Cabinet to Mr. Gladstone and Lord Canning. Mr. Gladstone might, if he pleased, have been Foreign Secretary, and Leader of the House of Commons. But even if Lord Stanley had not been as warm a supporter of legislation against the Roman Catholics as Lord John himself, the ghost of Protection, for it was no more, stood between the free traders and their opponents. Greville says that Lord Stanley was not at this time really desirous of forming a Government. This view is not consistent with Lord Stanley's own explanations in the House of Lords. He did his best, and he failed. He was no doubt most naturally and sincerely anxious to associate with him men of intellect and character whom he had known as colleagues in former days. He did not wish to rely merely upon the dregs of the Conservative party, even when illuminated by the genius of Mr. Disraeli. He was not sorry to take advantage of one man's modesty, another man's scruples, and the incapacity of a third. But he would have liked to form a

really strong Administration, and no attachment to the Corn Laws would have stood in his way. 1851.

On the 28th of February 1851, elaborate explanations were made in both Houses by Lord Lansdowne, Lord Aberdeen, Lord Stanley, Lord John Russell, and Sir James Graham. From these it appeared that the Queen had tried every possible combination, and all without success. Lord Aberdeen himself had been invited to try his hand. But a Prime Minister opposed to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was out of the question. Lord Stanley's statement was one of the most curious ever submitted to a Legislative Assembly. It was frank in tone, and not undignified in substance. But even frankness may be pushed to excess, and Lord Stanley's followers would have been more or less than human if they had enjoyed the comparison their leader instituted between the Peelites and themselves. Upon the Peelites he was indeed severe. He accused them of using their great talents not to assist, but to frustrate, the work of administration. At the same time he pointed out with ruthless candour that they were remarkable not only for their natural ability, but for their official experience, whereas his own supporters, the Protectionists, with one or two exceptions, were equally destitute of both. In a style that oddly recalls the parable of the guests who all with one consent began to make excuse, he described the man too modest to be a Minister, the man too much engrossed with his own business, and the man whose interests were exclusively domestic. This last idea vastly tickled the more frivolous portion of society, and subjected Lord Stanley to a good deal of what we now call chaff. But those who played the game with Stanley almost invariably got the worst of it. "After Lord Stanley's

His ex
plana

1851. speech," says Lord Malmesbury,[1] "Lady Jocelyn asked him whom he had meant by the person he alluded to who refused to join him on account of the pressure of his domestic duties. He answered, 'Not Jocelyn,' at which she looked put out." A grimmer retort has seldom been made, and the lady could not deny that she had brought it upon herself. In the House of Lords, Lord Stanley proceeded to explain that he and his political friends were not strong enough to face the House of Commons in a minority when the supplies had not been voted, and a dissolution was impossible. The Queen had imposed no conditions on him, and had not raised any objection to the use of the Prerogative for dissolving Parliament. He hinted fairly enough that Lord John Russell's reasons for resigning were not exhaustive. Lord John had specified the narrow majority on Mr. Disraeli's agricultural motion, and his own defeat on Mr. Locke King's Bill. But Lord Stanley implied, not without reason, that the unpopularity of the Budget, and the alienation of the Irish Catholic vote, had a good deal to do with the refusal of the Whigs to continue in office. Turning to his own policy, he expressed a strong opinion that the income tax should not be permanent, pleaded as an alternative for a fixed duty on foreign corn, and intimated that the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was a hasty, ill-considered measure. Then he sat down, after making the announcement that the Queen had applied for advice to the most venerable and illustrious of her subjects.

His diversions.

Lord Stanley was such a striking figure, and the part he played in public life, though not really significant, was so brilliantly picturesque, that this episode in his career deserves to be completed by an inimitable page of Greville, dated the 10th of

[1] *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, vol. i. p. 280.

April 1851: "At Newmarket on Sunday, and re- 1851.
turned yesterday. It was worth while to be there to see Stanley. A few weeks ago he was on the point of being Prime Minister, which only depended on himself. Then he stood up in the House of Lords, and delivered an oration full of gravity and dignity, such as became the man who had just undertaken to form an Administration. A few days ago he was feasted in Merchant Taylors' Hall, amidst a vast assembly of lords and commons, who all acknowledged him as their chief. He was even complimented amid thunders of applause upon his great and statesmanlike qualities, and he again delivered an oration, serious as befitted the lofty capacity in which he then appeared. If any of his vociferous disciples and admirers, if some grave members of either House of Parliament, or any distinguished foreigner who knew nothing of Lord Stanley, but what he saw, heard, or read of him, could have suddenly found themselves in the betting-room at Newmarket on Tuesday evening and seen Stanley there, I think they would have been in a pretty state of astonishment. There he was, in the midst of a crowd of blacklegs, betting men, and loose characters of every description, in uproarious spirits, chaffing, rowing, and shouting with laughter and joking. His amusement was to lay Lord Glasgow a wager that he did not sneeze in a given time, for which purpose he took pinch after pinch of snuff, while Stanley jeered him and quizzed him with such noise that he drew the whole mob around him to partake of the coarse merriment he excited. It really was a sight and a wonder to see any man playing such different parts, and I don't suppose there is any other man who would act so naturally, and obey all his natural impulses in such a way, utterly regardless of appearances, and not caring what anybody might think of

1851. the minister and the statesman, so long as he could
851. have his fun." Although Bulwer Lytton drew an admirable portrait of this singular personage in his fine poem "St. Stephen's," only Dryden could have done full justice to the various moods of Lord Stanley.[1]

The return of the Whigs. The Duke of Wellington, never original and always sensible, recommended Her Majesty to send once more for Lord John and the old gang. Accordingly they all returned, and while the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill dragged its slow length along, Sir Charles Wood proceeded to reconstruct his Budget just as if nothing had happened. The confusion of parties spelt the stability of the Whigs. Sir Charles Wood's Budgets were like the American politician's opinions. If they were not acceptable, they could always be altered. In 1851 the inevitable transformation was effected on the 5th of April. The grant from the Treasury to the rates for pauper lunatics was abandoned. The window tax disappeared, and this was Wood's one great financial achievement; but the duty on inhabited houses was entirely rearranged. All houses rated below twenty pounds were to be entirely exempted. Ninepence in the pound was to be paid on dwelling-houses, and sixpence in the pound on shops. This absorbed the available surplus, and no more was said about the necessity of reducing the National Debt. In spite of these concessions Sir Charles Wood suffered defeat. Mr. Hume carried against him, by a majority of 14, an amendment limiting the income tax to one year, and next month a Select Committee was appointed to consider the whole subject. But although these changes and chances weakened the moral authority of the Government, the still feebler position of the Protection-

His dive

[1] A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome.

ists, and the circumstances of the time, preserved them from immediate overthrow. The Great Exhibition, opened in Hyde Park on the 1st of May by the Queen in person temporarily distracted the public mind from political disputes. This great commercial enterprise was conceived by Prince Albert, who had been assisted in its earlier stages by Sir Robert Peel. The building, now so familiar as the Crystal Palace, was designed by Mr. Paxton.[1] The exhibition was open to the whole world, and gave a great stimulus to international trade. By the advice of the Prince, to whom the whole credit belongs, a Parliamentary grant was avoided, and subscriptions were received to the amount of seventy-five thousand pounds. The show was not closed till October, and its success was complete. 1851.

Before Lord John Russell returned to office, he had become aware of the passionate resentment which he had aroused in Ireland by his ecclesiastical policy, and he had also been impressed by his conference with the Peelites, who alone, with a few Radicals, kept their heads. On the 7th of March the Home Secretary announced that all the clauses of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill after the first, which prohibited the new titles and the publication of Papal Bulls in England, would be dropped; that charitable bequests in Ireland would not be restricted, and that safeguards would be provided for Bishops of the Episcopal Church in Scotland. The debate upon the second reading of this ridiculous Bill lasted for seven weary nights. The Irish Catholics naturally did all they could to obstruct it. The regular Opposition, on the other hand, found that they had got hold of a good thing. They did not oppose the Bill. On the contrary, they condemned Lord John's retreat.

[1] Created Sir Joseph Paxton.

1851. it as insufficient, and taunted Ministers with not
851. acting up to the Durham letter. *Punch* published the celebrated cartoon of Lord John as the mischievous urchin who chalked "No Popery" on Wiseman's door, and then ran away. Ministers were asked to explain why Lord Clarendon had recognised the territorial rights of the Irish Bishops. For even those who most strongly resisted the proposed penalties acknowledged that these titles were not valid in law. No explanation was given, for there was no explanation to give. Nor could Lord John deny that he had sent Lord Minto on a mission to the Pope, and had carried three years before a Bill for authorising diplomatic relations with the Court of Rome. Everything said against the Government in this debate was well merited, and the Prime Minister was told fairly enough that the name of Russell could no longer be associated with civil and religious liberty. All the arguments were against the Bill, though the numbers for it were overwhelming. The third Sir Robert Peel delivered his maiden speech in opposition to his wiser brother, and in support of a measure which his father would have eschewed. The Solicitor-General, Sir Alexander Cockburn, whose morals were unfortunately much less doubtful than his creed, set himself up as the violent and vituperative champion of the Protestant religion, which could well have dispensed with his aid. Mr. Henry Drummond, the Irvingite, a man of ostentatious piety, reviled the Roman Catholic faith in language so disgusting that it cannot be quoted even as an example of the temper in which Parliament was passing penal laws. Mr. Page Wood was for once carried away by the current, and departed from the consistent Liberalism of his life. But the sound and fury of a sham patriotism and a burlesque Protestantism were

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empty and hollow indeed when compared with the dignified and impressive speeches of Mr. Roundell Palmer,[1] Mr. Sidney Herbert, Sir James Graham, and Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Herbert drily remarked that there would have been no popular excitement if the new Bishops had been called overseers. Sir James Graham somewhat marred the effect of an excellent speech by predicting civil war in Ireland. He was often too apt to take the tone of Mr. Croaker in the *Good-natured Man*. But his plea for religious toleration, like Mr. Gladstone's for religious freedom, was firmly expressed and nobly conceived. Between them they effectually demolished Lord John's contention that the Pope was claiming temporal sovereignty in these islands. He was doing nothing of the sort. His temporal sovereignty was Italian, and bad enough in all conscience. What he claimed here was the exercise of spiritual authority within the limits of his own Church, and that no Act of Parliament could prevent.

1851.

The Opposition of the Peelites.

When the Bill reached the stage of Report on the 27th of June, a just humiliation fell upon the Government. Sir Frederick Thesiger[2] had several amendments upon the paper for strengthening the Bill. Lord John Russell repudiated them as unnecessary. The most important and the most odious of them enabled a common informer to sue for penalties with the consent of the Attorney-General. The Irish Catholics walked out of the House, and the amendments were carried. Thus Lord Lansdowne had to propose in the House of Lords a Bill of which he and his colleagues did not approve. Nevertheless it passed that House without difficulty, and received the Royal Assent on the 1st of August. Lord Aberdeen moved its

The humiliation of the Government.

[1] Afterwards Lord Selborne.
[2] Afterwards Lord Chelmsford.

1851. rejection, which was seconded by the Duke of Newcastle. But they had only thirty-eight supporters, most of whom were Catholics, though they included Lord Canning. The Duke of Wellington, as usual, stood by the Government. Lord Lyndhurst recanted his recantation of 1829. It is painful to record the fact that the Bishop of St. David's spoke and voted for this Bill. Strong indeed must have been the wave of intolerance which swept Connop Thirlwall off his principles.

The futility of the Act. Lord Aberdeen, in the course of his speech, predicted that the Bill, or rather the Act, would be a dead letter. Never was prophecy more absolutely fulfilled. Bishop Wilberforce expressed a pious hope that the Government would not be content with legislating against his fellow-Christians and brother Bishops, but would also prosecute them. No such prosecution was ever undertaken. No common informer was ever allowed to sue. No penalty imposed by the Ecclesiastical Titles Act was ever enforced. The Catholic Bishops politely ignored its provisions. Their leading paper, the *Tablet*, ostentatiously defied the law, and nothing happened. At an early stage of the Parliamentary debates, Mr. Milner Gibson, being asked by Lord John Russell what his plan was, replied that his plan was to do nothing at all. If that plan had been followed, wasted months would have been saved, though it is true that some eloquent pleas for truly Liberal principles would have been left unspoken. The Act found its grave in the Statute Book, a grave of contemptuous oblivion. It was repealed in 1871, but the process excited no more interest than if it had been a formal step of the Statute Law Revision Committee. The British Parliament never sank so low before or since as it sank in 1851. The best result of this ignoble squabble

was Newman's *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England*, which, to say nothing of their eloquence, are as witty as anything of Sydney Smith's. 1851.

The Catholics and the Jews.

It may be said that the Jews were treated with as much intolerance as the Roman Catholics. But there is this difference. A special law was framed against the Catholics. The House of Lords refused to relieve the Jews from an unjust law already made. On the 26th of July 1850, Baron Rothschild, having accepted the Chiltern Hundreds, and been re-elected for the City of London, had presented himself to be sworn, and had claimed to take the oaths on the Old Testament. After long and acrimonious debates, his claim had been allowed by the House. The Baron then took the oaths in the usual form until he came to the oath of abjuration, when he omitted the words "on the true faith of a Christian." Sir Frederick Thesiger, a zealot in the cause of religious persecution so far as the usages of the nineteenth century permitted, immediately moved a new writ, on the ground that the seat was vacant. This preposterous motion having been negatived, Mr. Page Wood took up the opposite extreme, and argued with great ability that Baron Rothschild had fulfilled the obligations of the law, inasmuch as he had sworn in words binding on his conscience. Nothing in Lord Hatherley's long and distinguished career does him more honour than the struggle which he, a pious churchman of the straitest evangelical orthodoxy, conducted on behalf of a then despised and down-trodden sect. The Government took a middle course, and finally the House resolved, first, that the Baron could not take his seat; secondly, that a Bill should be introduced next year enabling him to do so. Accordingly in

1851. 1851 a Jewish Relief Bill was for the third time passed by the House of Commons, and for the third time rejected by the House of Lords, the hostile majority being 36. Thereupon Alderman Salomons, who had been returned at a by-election for Greenwich, repeated the claim of Baron Rothschild. But he went further. For after taking the oath in the form binding upon his conscience, he also took his seat, addressed the House in a spirited harangue, and only withdrew under protest when the Serjeant-at-Arms tapped him on the shoulder. Mr. Page Wood, having become Solicitor-General, was precluded from taking independent action. But his place was supplied by Mr. Bethell, afterwards Lord Westbury, the most brilliant, if not the most scrupulous, of contemporary lawyers. The Legislature could not have regarded the oath of abjuration as essential, for they repealed it in the case of Catholics. But the view of Sir John Romilly, now Master of the Rolls, and Sir Alexander Cockburn, now Attorney-General, that Jews could not take their seats without legislation, was upheld in Miller *v.* Salomons by a majority in the Court of Exchequer, and by the whole Court of Exchequer Chamber. Lord Campbell, who presided at the hearing of the Appeal, said that his mind was free from doubt, although he had voted in both Houses of Parliament for the removal of Jewish disabilities, and was prepared to do so again. Thus the one thing which stood between the Jews and justice was the House of Lords. But that was a formidable barrier, because there was no popular movement strong enough to break it down. Lord Ashley, who had become Lord Shaftesbury by the death of his father, took the same line in the House of Lords as he had taken in the House of Commons. He

and Sir Robert Inglis, and perhaps a few others, honestly believed that if Christians were allowed not to vote for Jews, for that they could do already, but to be represented by Jews, the Christian character of the country would be destroyed. Upon men whose minds were so constituted argument was thrown away. They were unable even to see the contrast between what they could do and what they could not. They could keep out a Rothschild or a Salomons, whose exclusion or inclusion was of equally little importance. They could not keep out the Member for Buckinghamshire, who regarded religion as a secret of the Semitic race, and laughed at their mushroom creeds. Mr. Disraeli himself showed no disposition to fight the matter any further. He said, and it was true enough, that his own position was shared by no one else. He had no belief in the principles of religious equality. He held that Judaism was the root of Christianity, and entitled to special privileges as such. As for religious toleration, he would probably have agreed with Tom Paine, who said that its logical result would be a Bill for enabling the Almighty to receive the worship of Jews. 1851.

The Jews and the Catholics occupied between them nearly the whole session of 1851. But two useful measures of legal reform passed both Houses before the Prorogation on the 8th of August. One provided for the admissibility as witnesses of parties to civil actions, which would have made Bardell *v.* Pickwick impossible. The other created two Lords Justices to assist the Lord Chancellor in hearing Chancery Appeals. Lord Cranworth, then Vice-Chancellor, became the first of the new Lords Justices, and Knight-Bruce the second. Legal reforms.

South Africa was throughout 1851 the scene of a Kaffir war. The conflict broke out at the The last Kaffir war.

1851. end of 1850, and the Governor of Cape Colony, Sir Harry Smith, the victor of Aliwal, under-rated its gravity. The cause of this Kaffir rising, which was augmented by the Hottentots, and made more formidable by the desertion of the Cape Mounted Rifles, is believed to have been partly famine from loss of cattle, and partly the discontent of the Cape Colonists with the Government at home. Lord Grey thought that Sir Harry had acted without proper consideration, and ultimately recalled him in favour of General Cathcart, who finished the war. Sir Harry Smith was a gallant and pious soldier, a man of the Bible and the sword. Trusting in his own personal influence, he thought he could reconcile the Dutch farmers with the British and with the natives by attendance at Boer prayer-meetings and by ostentatious patronage of native chiefs. Simple, generous, and high-minded, he never realised the impossibility of persuading the Boer to regard the Kaffir as his equal. His eccentric enthusiasm got him into trouble, and Lord Grey was justified in removing him from his post.[1] Lord Grey, however, had himself been guilty of grievous error in endeavouring to thrust upon Cape Colony the hateful system of transportation. This Kaffir war delayed the introduction of self-government at the Cape, for which letters patent had been issued by the crown. It has been held by the highest legal authorities, and was asserted by Lord Lyndhurst in debate, that a grant of this kind cannot be revoked, and can only be abrogated by statute. But while the Kaffir war was raging, both Dutch and British were so insecure that to carry out con-

Jan. 10, 1852.

Sir Harry Smith and Lord Grey.

[1] The Duke of Wellington expressed in the House of Lords the opinion that the military grounds for recalling Sir Harry Smith were inadequate. But there were political grounds also, upon which the Duke was silent.

stitutional reforms was a practical impossibility. 1851.
Lord Grey's two volumes of letters to Lord John Russell, published in 1853, are a clear and forcible vindication of his Colonial policy. He was one of the ablest men who ever presided at the Colonial Office, and his Colonial reforms were excellent in themselves. His chief fault was a lecturing, pedantic manner, which took the savour from concession, and added a sting to rebuffs.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LITERATURE OF THE MID CENTURY

1850. On the 23rd of April 1850, the anniversary of Shakespeare's birth and death, died William Wordsworth in his eighty-first year. The fount had long been mute; the channel had long been dry. But Wordsworth had everything that should accompany old age, "as honour, love, obedience, troops of friends." He had outgrown his early unpopularity, and survived almost all his detractors. He was a classic in his lifetime, and those who were not convinced had at least been put to silence. Since the death of Southey he had been Poet Laureate. Although the Birthday Odes which furnished material for Peter Pindar and other wits had fallen into disuse, it was determined to keep up the post, and the first offer went to Samuel Rogers, Wordsworth's senior by seven years. Rogers was a true poet, and his *Italy* is full of exquisite passages. But when he declined the honour on account of his great age, it passed to one whose imagination was loftier, and whose range was wider, than his own. Alfred Tennyson was then in the prime of life, and had recently published *In Memoriam*. His earlier poems had made him famous, and it was to *Ulysses* that he owed the pension given him by Peel, which saved him from the necessity of working for his bread. That is not a very hard fate for most people, but

The new Laureate.

it would have distracted Tennyson from the proper business of his life. It is not without a shock that one connects *In Memoriam* with an office in the Royal household. *In Memoriam* is, as everybody knows, a passionate lamentation for the author's college friend, Arthur Hallam, son of the historian, who had died so far back as 1833. Advanced thinkers have attacked the philosophy of the poem as shallow. But it is not really a philosophical poem at all. Its subjects are the great commonplaces of life and death, and grief, and remembrance, and the loss of friends. There too may be found that natural yearning for the assurance of immortality which has no more to do with systems of philosophy than with systems of mathematics. Tennyson's creed, so far as it can be gathered from his poems, was pure theism. About the sublime beauty of the verse there could not be two opinions among competent judges. In that respect Tennyson is not surpassed by Milton, or by Shelley. Some contemporary notices of *In Memoriam* throw into the shade by their stupid perversity the *Edinburgh* on Wordsworth, or the *Quarterly* on Keats. But those whose deepest feelings were revealed and interpreted to them in a threnody that ranks with *Lycidas* or *Adonais* did not care for sneers at the "Amaryllis of the Chancery Bar," and the critic who confessed his inability to identify

1850.

> The shadow cloaked from head to foot,
> That keeps the key of all the creeds,

should have left the higher literature alone.

From that time till his death, more than forty years afterwards, Tennyson was the acknowledged head of English poetry. The choice of the Sovereign, or of the Minister, set the seal to public opinion, which it did not make. He was not

1850. appointed till the 5th of November, nearly seven months after Wordsworth's death.[1] The letter came from the Queen, not from Lord John Russell, and was signed by her private secretary. But Lord John must have been consulted, and his taste in such matters was sound. Tennyson "took the whole day to consider, and at the last wrote two letters, one accepting, one refusing, and determined to make up his mind after consultation with his friends at dinner."[2] *In vino sapientia.* As the position of Laureate was to be retained, the public interest required that it should be occupied by the foremost poet of the age, and not by some spiritual descendant of Eusden or Pye. Tennyson had occasionally to write Court odes, and they are perhaps the least successful specimens of his art. But nobody else could have written them better, and they never lack dignity of tone. His first poem as Laureate, and one of his best, was naturally addressed to the Queen. It is dated
1851. March 1851, and opens with the familiar stanzas —

> Revered, beloved — O you that hold
> A nobler office upon earth
> Than arms, or power of brain or birth
> Could give the warrior kings of old,
>
> Victoria — since your Royal grace
> To one of less desert allows
> The laurel greener from the brows
> Of him that utter'd nothing base.

To say that Wordsworth "uttered nothing base" might be described by a Wordsworthian as damning him with faint praise. That Tennyson had no such idea is plain from what he says himself

[1] Lord John Russell suggested also to the Queen the names of Sheridan Knowles and Henry Taylor. Her Majesty chose Tennyson under the influence of the Prince, who was a great admirer of *In Memoriam.*

[2] *Tennyson: a Memoir*, by Hallam, Lord Tennyson, vol. i. p. 336.

in his Diary for the 21st of February 1851.[1] He thinks that in this poem "the empire of Wordsworth should be asserted; for he was a representative Poet Laureate, such a poet as kings should honour, and such an one as would do honour to kings — making the period of a reign famous by the utterance of memorable words concerning that period." This is a singular judgment, for few think of Wordsworth in connection with any period, or any reign, and what official poetry he wrote has been long since forgotten. But at least it shows a thorough admiration on Tennyson's part for his illustrious predecessor. 1851.

The middle of the nineteenth century has not a good literary reputation. But it is literary criticism, rather than literary production, that was at fault. Besides *In Memoriam* there appeared Mrs. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, which are the most original, the most impassioned, and the most melodious of all her verses. If she had published only these, with a few lyrics, such as "The Great God Pan," and "The Swan's Nest among the Reeds," her reputation, high as it is, would probably stand higher. *Aurora Leigh* may be excepted, for it is rather a novel in verse than a poem. *David Copperfield*, published the same year, was its author's favourite, and perhaps his masterpiece. Mr. Micawber is almost as well known as Falstaff, and in the unexpected raciness of his humour he may be called Shakespearean. It is known that Dickens put more of himself into this book than in any other. Hence the vivid reality which shines through the caricature. The fame and power of Dickens were now at their height. He was a more genial, though not a more sentimental moralist than Thackeray. If he sometimes annoyed

Mrs. Browning.

David Copperfield.

[1] *Memoir*, vol. i. p. 338.

1851. practical reformers by his exaggerations, and his not infrequent ignorance of what had been already done, he had an enormous influence in softening the minds of men, and disposing them to schemes of humanity. In politics he was a Radical, if not a Socialist. But he had no fixed and immutable principles. He hated cruelty and oppression. Whenever he saw an abuse which bore upon the poor, he went straight at it, and his onslaught was extremely formidable. He would not have been the force he was if he could have looked at both sides of a question as a statesman must look at them. He lived to see the abolition of imprisonment for debt, the reform of the Civil Service, and the gradual deliverance of the public from a barbarous system of law. But the hearty and wholesome laughter which his books excited was not the least of the services he rendered to his countrymen.

Tennyson and the Broad Church.

In Memoriam was from the first a text-book of the Broad Church. Frederick Robertson, the great preacher of Brighton, was among its earnest and most enthusiastic admirers. Another was Frederick Denison Maurice, a sort of English Bunsen, to whom Tennyson addressed a few years afterwards the most Horatian of all his poems.[1] At that time Tennyson was to the latitudinarian party in the Church of England very much what Burns had been at the close of the eighteenth century to the "Moderates" of the Scottish Establishment, without the obvious difficulties which attended an ecclesiastical alliance with the author of "The Jolly Beggars." A single stanza of *In Memoriam* expresses the views of these clerical Tennysonians.

> Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
> At length he beat his music out.
> There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds.

[1] "Come when no graver cares employ."

There was no more devout Tennysonian than Mr. Jowett of Balliol, though it may be held to illustrate the universality of genius that in this respect Jowett should have had a rival in Mr. Gladstone. To what may be called the religious scepticism of the age Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, published in 1851, was a powerful contribution. Mr. Greg, who sometimes wrote as W. R. G., was a forcible reasoner, with a remarkably lucid style, a natural turn for exposing sophistry, and a fund of contempt almost equally divided between orthodox theologians and unorthodox economists. He hated a loose reasoner as a monk hates a loose liver, and is the best possible example of the school who hold that the world can be governed by logic. They ignore the profound saying of David Hume, too profound not to be misunderstood, that reason is, and ought to be, the slave of the passions. "But they maintain the state of the world, and all their desire is in the work of their craft." At the opposite pole of thought and imagination, if indeed imagination can be predicated of one, or thought of the other, stood Thomas Carlyle, who, by a strange coincidence, published in 1851 the biography of his friend John Sterling. Carlyle undertook the task because it had already been performed by Julius Hare, and he did not like the performance. Sterling was a Broad Churchman who left the Church. Hare was a Broad Churchman who remained in it. Sterling, if the less orthodox, was the more religious man of the two. Carlyle, who detested all churches, wished to rescue from "shovel-hatted" patronage the memory of his dead friend. He completely succeeded, and wiped Hare's book out of existence. But he did much more than that. The *Life of Sterling* is a literary masterpiece. One of the most eloquent books that its eloquent author ever wrote,

1851.

Greg's *Creed of Christendom.*

Carlyle's *Life of Sterling.*

1851. it is quite the most sympathetic, the most tolerant, the most genial, and the most human. Carlyle was not an exact reasoner, nor indeed a reasoner at all. But he had humour and fancy, and a deep insight into spiritual things. He was good for a prosaic age. If he could not understand the objections to slavery, or the arguments for representative institutions, he could appeal to parts of man's nature which the mere controversialist never reaches, and to minds which instinctively resent dogmatic treatment of ultimate things. If he had written less, he would perhaps have written better. But the best of what he wrote could hardly be surpassed.

The Stones of Venice. In 1851 Carlyle's most famous disciple produced one of his most important works. Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* is a perfectly equal and sustained effort of his genius at its height. To call Mr. Ruskin eloquent is not altogether to praise him. For in the long run his eloquence upset the balance of his mind, and carried him where he would not, or at least should not, have gone. But in *The Stones of Venice* he has it entirely under control. It serves its proper purpose in making beautiful and memorable the results of his vast knowledge, his patient labour, his artistic enthusiasm, and his exquisite taste. That Ruskin discovered Turner is a popular delusion. Turner, who died on the 19th of December 1851, at the age of seventy-six, was a great and famous painter long before Ruskin wrote a line. It was the appreciation of Italian art, almost extinct since the days of Sir Joshua, who studied in Italy, that Ruskin really restored in England. For Italian art, and for Italian architecture he had an unbounded, though not an indiscriminate, enthusiasm. The two salient points in *The Stones of Venice* are the Ducal Palace and the Scuola di San Rocco. The Ducal Palace,

because it is the great central building of the world, 1851.
the meeting-place of the Gothic and Byzantine styles. The School of San Rocco, because it contains the principal collection of Tintoret's pictures, and Mr. Ruskin, after his early idolatry of Titian was over, considered Tintoret to be the greatest of all painters, as his "Crucifixion" was the greatest of all pictures. The superb splendour of Ruskin's prose nowhere reaches a higher level than in the contrast which he draws between St. Mark's and an English cathedral. The index to *The Stones of Venice*, though it omits the Carpaccios in San Giorgio dei Schiavoni, is one of the best guide books ever composed. But throughout the work, though its object is primarily architectural, there seems to march in solemn grandeur the historical procession of the Venetian Republic. Whether the old Doges were quite the saints that Ruskin describes them to have been; whether the Republic really perished because it declined from religion to trade, and from trade to pleasure, or whether the rivalry of the Turk had not something to do with it, are questions which Mr. Ruskin's eloquence cannot settle. He was less interested in historic accuracy than in demonstrating the moral government of the world. He was brought up in the straitest sect of Evangelicalism, and at this period of his life he could hardly describe a picture of the Virgin without denying her right to be worshipped. But these individual peculiarities do not in the least diminish the value of what Mr. Ruskin did in fostering the love of beauty, and diffusing the knowledge without which it is mere caprice. In his old age he characteristically grumbled that he had made a large number of entirely foolish persons take an interest in art. He did not induce his master to take an interest in it. "Art criticism" was to Carlyle

1851. all stuff, mere insistence upon "the Correggiosity of Correggio." There is no evidence that he cared for any picture, any statue, or any building. It is strange that his two chief pupils should have been James Anthony Froude, to whom all phases of culture were familiar, and John Ruskin.

John Tenniel. A great artist, whom no one appreciated better than Mr. Ruskin, began his career in 1851, when John Tenniel sent his first drawings to *Punch*. At that time the chief contributor to that excellent mirror of the age was John Leech, a humorist and a caricaturist of the highest order. But for half a century Tenniel continued his genial career with universal applause, and without offending any one. He gave dignity to caricature by purging it of all ugly and sordid elements. In

Macready. this year Macready retired from the stage, to the accompaniment of a fine sonnet from the Laureate, and was succeeded, so far as one actor can succeed another, by Charles Kean. In 1851 also were published two books which have absolutely nothing in common except the English language. George

George Borrow. Borrow's *Lavengro* is the most fascinating, if not the most popular, of all his strange, wild, humorous, egoistical, poetical writings. Borrow was probably, as he says himself, "at the root mad." But, as Plato says, if madness be the gift of God, it may be the source of the greatest blessings to mankind. There have been many saner men whom English literature could better afford to lose than George Borrow. Herbert Spencer's

Herbert Spencer. *Social Statics*, the earliest of his books, is also the simplest and the most intelligible. Without underrating his later and larger works, we may say that nowhere has the need for a scientific study of social phenomena been more clearly or more persuasively argued. Electric telegraphy made great

strides in 1851. Submarine cables were laid from Dover to Calais, and from Dublin to Holyhead. One of the first pieces of news to come through the Anglo-French cable was the announcement of the *coup d'état*. The Irish cable, besides its social and commercial importance, has materially affected the relations between Downing Street and Dublin Castle. Although subsequent arrangements were afterwards made, the Home Secretary became for some years, by means of telegraphic communication, the actual Governor of Ireland. The age was one of material progress rather than of literary insight. Literature, new literature, had to struggle for existence, whereas every scientific discovery which promised practical results was received with enthusiastic applause.

1851. Submarine telegraphy.

CHAPTER XIV

PALMERSTON'S FALL

1850.

Palmerston and the Court.

In the summer of 1850, after the great debate on foreign policy which ended so triumphantly for the Government, Lord Palmerston seemed to have completely established his position. But it was in reality undermined. He had long been obnoxious to the Court, with whom he usually differed on questions of foreign politics. The latest point of difference was the ownership of Schleswig-Holstein. The Queen and Prince Albert, or rather Prince Albert and the Queen, were passionately German. Palmerston was obstinately Danish. A Minister who is on good terms with his colleagues has nothing to fear from the Court. But Lord Palmerston had alienated Lord John Russell and the Cabinet by his off-hand, imperious management of foreign affairs. He often took steps of great importance without consulting them, or even telling them what he proposed to do. He acted thus in the case of the Spanish marriages, in the case of Sir Henry Bulwer, and in the case of the claims upon Greece, which had just brought us within measurable distance of war with France. For years the Queen had been complaining to Lord John without result. Now at last she induced him to send Lord Palmerston a communication which might well have produced a vacancy in the Foreign Office. This document, dated at

Osborne on the 12th of August 1850, is a State Paper of so much importance that it must be given in full. 1850. The Queen's Memorandum.

"With reference to the conversation about Lord Palmerston which the Queen had with Lord John Russell the other day, and Lord Palmerston's disavowal that he ever intended any disrespect to her by the various neglects of which she has had so long and so often to complain, she thinks it right, in order to prevent any mistake for the future, to explain what it is she expects from the Foreign Secretary.

"She requires,

"1. That he will distinctly state what he proposes to do in a given case, in order that the Queen may know as distinctly to what she has given her Royal sanction.

"2. Having once given her sanction to a measure, that it be not arbitrarily altered or modified by the Minister. Such an act she must consider as failing in sincerity towards the Crown, and justly to be visited by the exercise of her constitutional right of dismissing that Minister. She expects to be kept informed of what arises between him and the Foreign Ministers before important decisions are taken, based upon that intercourse; to receive the foreign despatches in good time, and to have the drafts for her approval sent to her in sufficient time to make herself acquainted with their contents, before they must be sent off. The Queen thinks it best that Lord John Russell should show this letter to Lord Palmerston."[1]

The existence of this Memorandum was kept profoundly secret at the time. It was not shown to the Cabinet. Charles Greville, who knew most things, had no suspicion of it. There is no reference to it in any of Palmerston's private letters Its secrecy.

[1] Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, vol. ii. pp. 305–306.

1850. published by Mr. Ashley and written before 1852. His correspondence during the autumn of 1850 is rather more complacent than usual. He writes with ill-concealed satisfaction about the death of Peel, and even condescends to rejoice at the removal of his old enemy Louis Philippe, who had become perfectly powerless for good or for evil.[1] Yet, according to Prince Albert, he was deeply affected. On the 14th of August, the day of the Council for proroguing Parliament, he asked for an interview with the Prince, and was as unlike himself as one man could be unlike another. "He was very much agitated, shook, and had tears in his eyes."[2] This strange picture is followed by a long account of the interview, the Prince's own, in which Palmerston is made to say that the Memorandum was an "imputation on his honour as a gentleman." It was certainly nothing of the kind, and the whole narrative, though doubtless written in good faith, strikes one as highly coloured. At the end His Royal Highness describes how he tried to extract from the Foreign Secretary what he would do if the difficulties about Schleswig-Holstein became acute, and how Palmerston, by talking against time, avoided answering such a preposterous question. If the Prince had wanted to put himself and the Queen in the wrong, he could have adopted no better means for the purpose than addressing hypothetical inquiries to a Secretary of State, whose obvious answer was "I will deal with that case when it arises."

Palmerston's interview with Prince Albert.

Although the letter had no more to do with Palmerston's honour as a gentleman than with his faith as a Christian, it was undoubtedly a severe rebuff. A year and a half afterwards, when the whole document, except the introductory paragraph,

[1] Ashley's *Life of Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 229.
[2] Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, vol. ii. p. 307.

had become public, Palmerston described it as written in anger by a lady as well as by a Sovereign.[1] But it never could have reached the Foreign Secretary except through the Prime Minister, who made himself responsible for every word of it. Now, Lord John has been accused of many things, but his worst enemy never charged him with being a courtier. It is unfair, therefore, to represent this as a mere quarrel between Palmerston and the Queen, or Palmerston and the Prince. The same answer may be made to the insinuation that this great Englishman was driven from office by a foreign intrigue. That idea he was pleased to encourage himself. But there is not a particle of evidence for it, and it was repudiated with unquestionable sincerity by Lord John. At the moment Palmerston behaved with unaccustomed meekness. He wrote immediately to the Prime Minister promising compliance with the Queen's wishes, and the only trace of asperity he showed was the substitution of the formal "My dear Lord John Russell" for the familiar "My dear John Russell."[2] He did not even hint at resignation. He apologised for former delays, and intimated that to avoid them in the future he might have to ask for a couple of extra clerks. Palmerston was a curious mixture of frankness and astuteness. He talked and wrote in the racy vernacular of a sportsman and a country gentleman. But he was always revolving schemes in his head, and nobody ever got anything out of him which he did not want to tell. On this occasion he reckoned on the Memorandum never seeing the light, and he may have felt that he was in the wrong. The warmest admirers of his policy must admit that he had no right to carry it out against the wishes of the

1850.

The Prime Minister's responsibility.

Palmerston's submission.

[1] Ashley's *Life of Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 329.
[2] Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, vol. ii. p. 306.

1850. Prime Minister and the Cabinet, by keeping them in the dark until it was too late for them to interfere. That he did not intend any personal disrespect to the Queen is undoubtedly true. What he intended was to have his own way.

The assault on Marshal Haynau.

But the days when, as Foreign Secretary, he could do as he pleased were at an end. In the autumn of 1850 the Austrian Marshal Haynau came to England, and visited Barclay's brewery. He had committed great cruelties in Hungary, and it was credibly reported that he had had women flogged. The draymen did not like their visitor, and expressed their sentiments in the form of broomsticks. The Marshal escaped under the protection of the police. Palmerston's sympathies were all with the draymen. Writing to Sir George Grey on the 1st of October 1850, he says, "Instead of striking him . . . they ought to have tossed him in a blanket, rolled him in the kennel, and then sent him home in a cab, paying his fare to the hotel."[1] This was a private letter, though it was written by one Secretary of State to another, and most of the writer's countrymen would probably have agreed with it. But being in that frame of mind Lord Palmerston naturally did not enjoy the task of expressing regret to the Austrian Chargé d'Affairs, Baron Koller, which he was required to do, and he consoled himself by the introduction of a paragraph reflecting on the imprudence of unpopular individuals who courted public opprobrium. Lord John Russell considered this paragraph "derogatory to the honour of the nation, as if no one could be safe in this country who was obnoxious to public feeling."[2] Finding that the despatch had been sent as written, he insisted on its withdrawal, and

[1] Ashley's *Life of Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 240.
[2] Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, vol. ii. p. 325.

the substitution of another without the offensive passage. This time Palmerston did threaten resignation. But on Lord John's persistence, he thought better of it and submitted. The conduct of these draymen, which deeply shocked Prince Albert, did not in the least shock the public, who highly approved of their frankness and vigour. 1850.

Mr. Gladstone's famous letter to Lord Aberdeen, which appeared in July 1851, enabled Palmerston to pay off one of the old scores that he never forgot. Mr. Gladstone had spent the winter of 1850–51 at Naples, and had there been an eye-witness of the abominable cruelties practised by King Ferdinand upon political prisoners, especially upon Poerio, a man of high character and great intellectual power, who had been guilty of no worse offence than opposition to the Government. Poerio was chained to a murderer. The wretched king had imprisoned all the Liberals he could lay his hands on; his victims numbered twenty thousand, and many of them had been put to the torture. This was the sort of Government against which renegade Whigs like Lord Brougham thought it a crime to conspire. Lord Aberdeen was much of the same opinion, and did all he could to postpone the publication of the pamphlet. But Mr. Gladstone was not to be restrained, and he found in Lord Palmerston the sympathy which had failed him in Lord Aberdeen. Palmerston was always sincerely humane, and he hated King "Bomba" for his cruelty. He also remembered the apology to that monarch which had been wrung from him for supplying the Sicilian insurgents with arms. He sent a copy of Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet to every British Minister in Europe, with instructions that he should bring it under the notice of the Government to which he was accredited. He also paid a

1851. Gladstone's Neapolitan letter.

Palmerston's official adoption of it.

1851. high tribute to Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons, which was an important incident in the long and chequered connection between those two statesmen. But King Ferdinand cared for none of these things. He did not believe that the Powers of Europe would interfere with him. He did believe that if he released his prisoners, they would dethrone him. So he kept them in gaol. Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet, and Lord Palmerston's adoption of it, had no practical and immediate result. But between them they had given a powerful impetus to the ultimate liberation of Italy.

Kossuth in England. In this particular episode there was nothing to embroil Lord Palmerston with his colleagues, or with the Court. But the arrival at Southampton in October 1851 of Louis Kossuth brought on a renewal of the struggle. Kossuth had been detained by the Sultan for two years, greatly to Palmerston's disgust. He was now at last released, and he expressed a desire to thank Lord Palmerston in person. Palmerston agreed to receive him at Broadlands. Meanwhile Kossuth had been delivering extremely eloquent speeches at Southampton and Winchester touching the rights of the people and the iniquities of kings. He was greeted with immense enthusiasm, and his mastery of the English language astounded all who heard him. But Lord John Russell was informed that if the Foreign Secretary had any communication with a man who led a rebellion against the Emperor, the Austrian Ambassador, Count Buol, would be recalled. The Austrians had better have been told to mind their own business, and put down their own rebels if they could. Lord John, however, again determined to assert his authority, and remonstrated against the proposed interview. Lord Palmerston replied

Palmerston's proposed reception of him.

with some heat that Lord John might compose his Cabinet as he pleased, but that he himself should receive any one he liked in his own house. Thereupon a Cabinet was summoned, and as all the Ministers except Lord Lansdowne were against Palmerston, he gave way. A few days afterwards, however, he admitted to the Foreign Office a Radical deputation from Finsbury and Islington to congratulate him on the release of Kossuth. This was harmless enough. But the addresses described the Emperors of Russia and Austria as despots, tyrants, and odious assassins. Against the use of this language Palmerston protested, and it is hard to see what more he could have done. He explained to the Prime Minister that he was not accustomed to deputations, and did not expect to see a report of his speech. But Lord Palmerston had in truth a curious hankering after the applause of Radicals. He was not in the least a Radical himself, nor a democrat, but an aristocrat, to whom Parliamentary reform after 1832 was anathema. But he had a strong popular fibre, and though not in ordinary circumstances a good debater, he relied through all the changing scenes of life upon the House of Commons.

1851.

Palmerston yields to his colleagues, Nov. 18.

The Radical deputation at the Foreign Office.

Finsbury, and Islington, and Kossuth would soon have been forgotten if it had not been for the course of events in France, where the President of the Republic and the National Assembly were at daggers drawn. Louis Napoleon had been elected for four years, and the period was drawing to a close. A large number of Deputies, who might well have been a majority, were in favour of legislating against a second term. There were other grounds of dispute, but this was the crucial one. The President became alarmed, and determined to be beforehand with the Assembly. He

1851. had sworn to obey the Constitution. He broke it. On the 2nd of December 1851, he took a step for which there is happily no English name. He perpetrated the *coup d'état*. Before daybreak he had arrested his principal opponents, among whom were General Changarnier, General Cavaignac, and M. Thiers. They were honest Republicans. He was a dishonest one. He dissolved the National Assembly, annulled the Council of State, and declared a state of siege. At the same time he issued a manifesto to the army in the name of Napoleon, and an appeal to the people against their own representatives. He asked them to elect a President for ten years, whose Ministers should be responsible to him alone. He promised a Legislative Body chosen by universal suffrage, and a Senate. Two hundred and thirty deputies, not being favourable to his designs, were imprisoned. The people were to vote from the 14th to the 21st of December. But the army was to vote before the people. On the 4th of December there was a wholesale massacre of inoffensive citizens by the troops on the boulevards, after which resistance ceased. The President's chief accomplices were St. Arnaud, whose real name was Le Roy; Fialin, otherwise Persigny; de Morny, his own illegitimate half brother, and a rascal called de Maupas, a prefect of police. The news of this infamous crime excited the greatest indignation in England, and the press almost unanimously condemned it. Lord Palmerston for once did not understand the sentiments of his countrymen. On the 3rd of December, without waiting for details, and without consulting any one, he expressed orally to M. Walewski, the French Ambassador, his approval of what had been done. On the 6th of December he wrote to Lord Normanby in the name of the Queen the formal

The *coup d'état*.

The massacre on the boulevards.

Palmerston's approval of the *coup d'état*.

orders of the Cabinet not to alter his relations with the French Government, and to abstain from all interference with the internal affairs of France. Lord Normanby, a bad diplomatist, communicated this despatch to M. Turgot, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, though he had not been instructed to do so. M. Turgot replied that he knew all about it from M. Walewski, and that Lord Palmerston entirely approved of the President's action. Upon Lord Normanby's remonstrating, and complaining of the position in which he had been placed, Palmerston gave in writing at some length his reasons for the opinion that either the Assembly or the President must go down, and that he preferred the President. Meanwhile Lord Normanby had written to Lord John, and the Queen insisted upon an explanation, which Palmerston neglected for some days to give. On the 17th of December Lord John wrote to Lord Palmerston dismissing him from the Foreign Office, and offering him the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, with a British Peerage, which Palmerston naturally refused with scorn. On the 22nd there was a meeting of the Cabinet, which Palmerston of course did not attend, when Lord John's action, though it had been taken on his own responsibility, was unanimously approved. Lord Palmerston was succeeded by Lord Granville, then a young man, afterwards for many years the representative of the Liberal party in the House of Lords. Lord John pressed Macaulay also to join the Cabinet. But Macaulay had something better to do.

1851.

Neutrality of the Cabinet.

Palmerston's dismissal.

Unanimously approved by the Cabinet.

In one sense Lord John Russell chose his ground of dismissal well. Louis Napoleon had established what was really a military despotism, with which Palmerston's Radical admirers could not possibly sympathise. On the other hand the *coup d'état* was completely successful. A more

Russell *v.* Palmerston.

1851. heinous crime has seldom been committed. It has been adequately, though not more than adequately, stigmatised by Kinglake in English, and by Victor Hugo in French. But black as it was, the people of France condoned it. Making all allowance for bribery and intimidation, a majority of seven millions and a half against half a million cannot be explained away. England no doubt was bound to preserve a strict neutrality, though Palmerston was an apostle of intervention. But he went out of his way to applaud a perjured usurper. Lord Normanby may have shown his hostility too plainly, and Lord Granville soon recalled him. That he should have felt it is creditable to him, as the opposite feeling was discreditable to Palmerston. Lord Russell, writing in extreme old age, thought that at this great crisis he had been hasty and precipitate. Most people who knew what was going on at the time thought that he had been too slow, and his justification is that Palmerston never returned to the Foreign Office. Palmerston's foreign policy cannot be understood by those who set out with the idea that he confined himself to British interests. He would himself have repudiated any such doctrine, as savouring of insular isolation, which he abhorred. He was a great European diplomatist, who wanted England to have a finger in every pie. The Colonies he ignored, and with India, until he became Prime Minister, he had nothing to do. He was interested in the affairs of every European country, and always ready to give his advice whether it was asked or not. He was never impartial. He always took a side, and though he hated reform at home, he loved revolution abroad. It was not, in the ordinary sense of the words, a British interest that Austria should be turned out of Lombardy and Venetia, that

Lord John's justification.

Palmerston's cosmopolitan interests.

Denmark should have Schleswig-Holstein, that Spain and Portugal should be constitutionally governed, that Hungary should be free, or that France should be enslaved. Lord Palmerston's worshippers are wont to say that he had higher than merely patriotic aims, that he supported the cause of humanity everywhere, that he was a true citizen of the world. That may be so in general, though it was hardly so in the case of France. But the notion that he limited his foreign policy to British interests, real or supposed, is purely mythical, and admits of easy disproof. 1851.

His conduct to his successor.

Although Lord Palmerston was not invariably discreet, even in speech, and still more often let his pen run away with him, he had on great occasions the instinct of behaviour. "Yesterday," says Greville, writing on the 27th of December 1851, "Granville was with Palmerston for three hours. He received him with the greatest cordiality and good humour. 'Ah, how are you, Granville? Well, you have got a very interesting office, but you will find it very laborious; seven or eight hours' work every day will be necessary for the current business, besides the extraordinary and Parliamentary, and with less than that you will fall into arrears.' He then entered into a complete history of our diplomacy, gave him every sort of information, and even advice; spoke of the Court without bitterness, and in strong terms of the Queen's sagacity; ended by desiring Granville would apply to him when he pleased for any information or assistance he could give him." "Very wise, gentlemanlike, becoming, and dignified," as Greville most justly remarks. But it was not with Lord Granville that Palmerston had any quarrel. He flew at higher game. Lord Granville, though not an industrious man, had considerable aptitude for

Lord Granville's good beginning.

1851. business, and made a good impression at the outset upon a very critical department. One of his first duties was to answer a despatch from Count Nesselrode of a curious and unusual kind. The Emperor Nicholas, who liked Louis Napoleon well enough as the enemy of freedom, but thoroughly despised him as a low-born adventurer, anticipated that he would become what his uncle had been, and instructed his Chancellor to declare that the Powers who signed the Treaty of Vienna were precluded from recognising the imperial title of any Napoleon. He therefore asked that if the event which he expected occurred, England should communicate with him before taking action in the matter. To this suggestion Lord Granville replied that, while desirous of co-operating with Russia, Her Majesty's Ministers could not pledge themselves always to consult the Russian Government before acting on an emergency. Palmerston would probably have said the same. Indeed, when Lord Granville drew up by desire of Lord John for the Queen's inspection an account of what the foreign policy of this country ought to be, he could only produce "a series of commonplaces," and "there was not a word in it to which both Palmerston and Aberdeen might not subscribe." [1] Lord Granville was certainly not a bit more disposed than Lord Palmerston himself to accept the dictation of Austria. When "Rome and Modena sent notes, suggested by Austria, through Count Buol, demanding the extradition of their refugees, Lord Granville met them by throwing them after him when he went out of the room." [2]

Lord Granville and Austria.

"The Saviour of Society."

Louis Napoleon, when he heard of Palmerston's fall, is reported to have exclaimed that he had lost his only friend in England. He was probably

[1] "Greville Memoirs," 14th January 1852.
[2] Malmesbury's *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, vol. i. p. 320.

suffering from the superstitious apprehension which with him took the place of remorse. At any rate he was mistaken. He was destined to find many English friends in unexpected quarters, from high-flying Tories like Malmesbury to thorough-going Radicals like Bright. The cynical platitude that nothing succeeds like success was seldom so well exemplified as in him. With very few exceptions, of whom Montalembert and Prosper Mérimée were perhaps the most conspicuous, all that was intellectually or morally distinguished in France stood aloof from him through his eighteen years of tyranny and corruption. But many Englishmen of the highest character forgot in the splendour of the Tuileries the horrors of Vincennes, and some even blasphemously hailed him as the Saviour of Society on the morrow of the 2nd of December. As for Lord Palmerston, his hatred of the Orleanists would have been a mania in a mind less sound, and the confiscation of their property by the "Prince President," which was simply theft, would have reconciled him to worse atrocities than the *coup d'état*. It is the way with saviours of society to begin by taking other men's lives, to proceed by taking other men's goods, and to reserve the deprivation of other men's liberties for the last. 1851.

When the British Parliament met on the 3rd of February 1852, a sorry scene was enacted in the House of Lords. Lord Stanley, who had become Earl of Derby on the death of his father in the previous June; Lord Grey, who led the House in the absence of Lord Lansdowne; and Lord Brougham, joined in an attack upon the free Press of a free country for denouncing a public criminal as he deserved. Only Lord Harrowby had the courage to stand up among his Peers for the liberties of England. A greater than Lord Harrowby addressed the House of Lords from the 1852. Louis Napoleon and the House of Lords.

1852.

Tennyson's protest.

outside. Alfred Tennyson wrote many finer poems than "The Third of February 1852." But it may be doubted whether he wrote one which more accurately reflected the best public opinion of the day. Even now it is impossible to read without some feeling of national pride such spirited verses as these:

> It was our ancient privilege, my Lords,
> To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing, into words.
> . . . . . .
> It might be safe our censure to withdraw;
> And yet, my Lords, not well: there is a higher law.
> As long as we remain, we must speak free,
> Tho' all the storm of Europe on us break;
> No little German state are we,
> But the one voice in Europe: we *must* speak;
> That if to-night our greatness were struck dead,
> There might be left some record of the things we said.
> If you be fearful, then must we be bold,
> Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant o'er.
> Better the waste Atlantic roll'd
> On her and us and ours for evermore.
> What! have we fought for freedom from our prime,
> At last to dodge and palter with a public crime?

Lord John and Lord Palmerston in the House of Commons.

Meanwhile an interesting drama of a different kind was enacted in the House of Commons. Challenged by Sir Benjamin Hall, the Radical Member for Marylebone, Lord John Russell explained the reasons for Lord Palmerston's dismissal. He made a long and able speech in his best Parliamentary style. But the real substance of it was the Queen's Memorandum, the operative part of which he read to the House. Although he had given Lord Palmerston notice, it may be doubted whether he was justified in taking this course. Lord Palmerston had not attacked him. He spoke before Palmerston rose. Apart from the grave Constitutional objection to using the name of the Sovereign in political debate, which Lord John sought to overcome by taking, as he could not help

taking, full responsibility for the Memorandum, it was hardly generous to imply that an old friend and colleague had been wanting in loyalty to the Crown. But Lord John was determined to crush his rival, and for the moment he crushed him. Palmerston's reply was feeble and inconclusive. Nobody supported him except Mr. Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton, and Lord Dudley Stuart, a politician too erratic to carry much weight with the House. Even Mr. Disraeli, the coolest and most sagacious of observers, was so far carried away by that atmosphere of the moment which obscures the Parliamentary intellect as to exclaim "There *was* a Palmerston."[1] But Lord Palmerston never knew when he was beaten, and therefore was never really beaten at all. Lord John soon found that he had sawn away the branch on which he was sitting between himself and the tree. 1852.

Lord John's second Reform Bill.

The first measure of the year was a mild Reform Bill, which Lord John Russell introduced on the 9th of February to prove that he was no longer "Finality John." He proposed to lower the occupation franchise in counties from fifty pounds to twenty, and the household franchise in boroughs from ten pounds to five. The property qualification for county members was to be abolished, and the Parliamentary oaths so altered as to admit Jews. But of this Bill no more was heard. Before it could be read a second time, or even printed, Lord John brought in the Militia Bill, which at once superseded it in public interest. The history of this Bill is an eloquent commentary upon the true nature of panics. The measure was, though it did not look it, four years old, being the offspring of the Duke's letter to Sir John Burgoyne, which was published in January 1848. At that

The Militia Bill.

[1] Ashley's *Life of Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 331.

1852. time the Government proposed to double the income tax, and to strengthen the Militia. But as the House of Commons, at the instigation of Lord George Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli, refused to double the income tax, the Militia was not strengthened. Despite the French Revolution, despite the general crash on the Continent, nothing was done, and parsimony succeeded to panic. The military Dictatorship of a Napoleon revived the old feelings of uneasiness, and the Militia Bill made its appearance. The great Napoleon was never able to invade England, but it was urged that the progress of steam navigation would enable the little one to do so. Vainly did Mr. Cobden urge that to protect the country from invasion was the business of the Navy. The general sense of the House, and, it must be added, of the people was against him. After all, this panic was respectable compared with fear of the Pope and his English Cardinal. For a Papal Brief was waste paper, whereas the French army was a tangible thing. Lord Palmerston's chance had now come. He did not of course oppose the principle of the Bill. He was always ready to increase the Army Estimates. But he revived an old question upon which he and Lord John had agreed to differ in 1848. Lord John was for a local militia, of which the members were to serve only in their respective counties. Lord Palmerston preferred a national force for service in any part of England. Without waiting to see the Bill, he moved to alter the preliminary Resolution by leaving out the word "local." Lord John, in a fit of temper, declared that if the Government were not allowed to bring in their own Bill, they would leave it in Lord Palmerston's hands. Notwithstanding this awful threat, the amendment was carried by 135 votes against 126, or a majority of 9. Thereupon the Prime Minister did actually move that the

Palmerston's tit-for-tat.

Bill should be prepared and brought in by Mr. Bernal[1] and Viscount Palmerston. Desisting, however, from this absurdity, he adopted the more dignified expedient of resigning office. So Lord Palmerston had, as he wrote, "his tit-for-tat with John Russell," and the last Whig Government was at an end. The division on the Militia Bill was an accident. The real cause of Lord John Russell's defeat was his dismissal of Lord Palmerston. Palmerston had been the strongest and the most popular man in his Administration. His Chancellor of the Exchequer was as such contemptible. His Home Secretary was no more than respectable. Lord Lansdowne's influence was rather social than political. To the rest of his colleagues the public were indifferent. Lord Grey had a very high reputation in the Colonial Office, and behind the scenes, but outside official circles he was unknown. The Cabinet was too aristocratic, and consisted of too few families. The Privy Seal was the Prime Minister's father-in-law. The Colonial Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer were brothers-in-law. The Home Secretary and the Colonial Secretary were cousins. The only untitled members of it were Mr. Fox Maule, son of Lord Panmure, and Mr. Labouchere, both afterwards Peers. The last really plebeian element disappeared with Lord Campbell. The Whigs died true to their order, to their families, and to themselves. 1852.

[1] The Chairman of Committees.

CHAPTER XV

THE FIRST GOVERNMENT OF LORD DERBY

1852.

Lord Derby Prime Minister.

His offer to Palmerston.

Its refusal.

After the defeat of the Whigs on the 20th of February the Queen, by the advice of Lord John Russell, sent for the Earl of Derby, who at once accepted office. Neither Sovereign nor Minister desired to see the reins in the hands of Lord Palmerston, who had actually turned out the Whigs. Lord Derby did indeed offer Palmerston a seat in the Cabinet, having obtained the Queen's consent on condition that the patron of the "Prince President" was not to lead the House of Commons. Even Lord Palmerston's perfect handwriting could not at that time reconcile Her Majesty to the receipt of a daily letter from him while Parliament was sitting. But Lord Palmerston put a speedy end to the negotiations. Nothing, he said, would induce him to join a Protectionist Government, and Lord Derby did not repudiate the description. Lord Palmerston cared as little as Mr. Fox for the principles of economic science, and in 1846 he would have preferred a fixed duty to repeal. But as a practical man he regarded Protection as dead, and as a sportsman he played the game according to the rules. The dismissal of a Minister is not an avowable reason for his joining the other side. To the Peelites Lord Derby made on this occasion no overtures at all. He had not forgiven them for their previous

and concerted refusal to join him. No doubt, 1852.
too, he knew than an overture would be fruitless. Sir James Graham had indeed declined to enter the Whig Cabinet in the previous autumn as President of the Board of Control. But at the same time Mr. Frederick Peel took office under Lord John as Under-Secretary for the Colonies.

Lord Derby's position.

Although Lord Derby, for once, did not hesitate, his position was most embarrassing. Just a year had elapsed since he protested that he would not march through Coventry, or to Windsor, with the forcible Feebles of the Protectionist host. Nothing had changed in the meantime. But Lord Derby persevered. He had now been for nearly eight years in the House of Lords. It does not appear that he ever expressed regret for having voluntarily left the House of Commons in 1844, when he was "called up in his father's barony" as Lord Stanley of Bickerstaffe. Yet it is difficult to suppose that he would have taken such a course if he could have foreseen the split of 1846, with all its momentous consequences. In the Lords he had made a series of brilliant speeches, and had demonstrated the practical impotence of his own order by carrying a futile vote of censure on the Government. He was in the prime of life, though sometimes disabled by gout, and in rhetorical power he was not surpassed by any subject of the Queen. He had held high offices with credit, but it was in debate that he had really distinguished himself. His colleagues were entirely without official experience, except Lord Lonsdale, the President of the Council, a large-acred nonentity, and Mr. Herries, the President of the Board of Control, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer a quarter of a century before to the "transient, embarrassed phantom of Lord

The "Who? Who?" Government.

1852.

Goderich."[1] By far the most conspicuous among them was Benjamin Disraeli, who, now in his forty-ninth year, became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Leader of the House of Commons. He had been the real, though not the nominal, head of the Protectionist party in the House ever since the resignation of Lord George Bentinck. He was regarded as the most brilliant speaker in the popular Chamber; he had literary faculties of no common order; and it is easier to assume that he was a man of genius than to account for him without the assumption. But he had neither administrative knowledge, nor administrative capacity, nor the character, in the sense of reputation, which has often supplied the place of both. Perhaps no man had ever reached so high a position in Parliament, and yet so completely failed to acquire the confidence, or even the respect, of those behind the scenes in politics. Then, and long afterwards, Tories, who were obliged to treat him with civility, and even friendliness, at St. Stephen's, would rather not be seen walking with him in the street. He had long been eager for office, and told Lord Malmesbury that he "felt just like a young girl going to her first ball."[2] "Now we have got a *status*," he kept on saying. Lord Malmesbury probably thought that he had one before. Qualifications for the Foreign Office, where he succeeded Lord Granville, Lord Malmesbury had none, except that he had edited his grandfather's despatches, and was the friend of Louis Napoleon. But the first recommendation was weak, and the second was weaker than the first. Of the other

The new Leader of the House.

The Foreign Secretary.

[1] The "Who? Who?" Government derived its name from a conversation between Lord Derby and the Duke of Wellington in the House of Lords. As the new Prime Minister repeated one by one the names of his colleagues, the old Duke, who was deaf, exclaimed in a perfectly audible tone, "Who? Who?"

[2] *Memoirs of an Ex-Mininister*, vol. i. p. 304.

Cabinet Ministers, Mr. Walpole, the Home Secretary, and Sir John Pakington, the Colonial Secretary, were respectable, and nothing more. The Lord Chancellor, Sir Edward Sugden, Lord St. Leonards, who had twice held the Great Seal of Ireland, was a consummate master of equitable jurisprudence, and in spite of his politics a legal reformer. The First Commissioner of Works, Lord John Manners, was destined to survive all his colleagues, and all his opponents. As Duke of Rutland, he was one of the pall-bearers at Mr. Gladstone's funeral. In administration he made no mark. But his Parliamentary speaking was excellent, and he was held by both parties in the highest personal esteem. 1852. The rest of the Cabinet.

Lord Derby characteristically said to Lady Malmesbury on the 6th of March 1852, "I have been driving a team of young horses this morning; not one had ever been in harness before, and they went beautifully; not one kicked amongst them." Surprise has been expressed that this raw Ministry did not more conspicuously break down. But a very important part of the British Constitution is concealed from the public eye. The country is governed in ordinary times and for every-day purposes by the permanent members of the Civil Service, who work for both parties with equal loyalty, and in some cases with equal contempt. The Civil Service was not quite the same thing in 1852 as it is now. The system of open competition had not been introduced, and there was more scope for jobbery. But the principle of continuity was identical, and it is that which enables a statesman to preside at once over an office of which he knows nothing. He is taught and assisted, though of course he cannot be directly controlled, by the most efficient profession ever organised since the business of Government The functions of the Civil Service.

1852. began. The civil servants of the Crown are men who prefer power to fame. They accept moderate salaries with security of tenure, dignity of employment, and the assurance of a reasonable pension. The highest of them is not paid more than half as much as a puisne judge. They are content that others should get the credit for what they do, and it has been well said that there are few things a man cannot achieve if he is philosophical enough to forego the credit.

Lord Derby and Protection.

But the crudity of his Cabinet, and of his colleagues outside the Cabinet, was by no means the most serious difficulty of the new Prime Minister. There seems no reason to doubt that Lord Derby was all through his life a sincere and convinced Protectionist. He was totally unacquainted with political economy, and once solemnly assured the House of Lords that a tax on foreign corn, if imposed for revenue, would not affect the price of corn in the home market. The Cabinet were, for the most part, of the same way of thinking.[1] Lord Derby had committed himself to Protection as deeply and as often as any public man was ever committed to anything. On the 22nd of January 1846, after he had left the Government of Sir Robert Peel, he said in the House of Lords, "I had placed before me the choice of separating from my colleagues, for whom, as I before stated, I entertained the most unfeigned esteem and regard, and with whom I had no previous difference, or to sacrifice my own individual opinion, and what I conceived to be my own personal consistency and honour." His opinions were unchanged by the General Election of 1847, although the Protectionists failed to obtain a

[1] Lord Lyndhurst, who had been offered, and had refused, a place in it, was jointly responsible for the repeal of the Corn Laws. But Lord Lyndhurst's principles seldom occurred to any one.

majority. On the 16th of June 1848 he declared, 1852.
"I have in no degree altered or modified the views I have before expressed in this House with regard to the propriety and policy of giving Protection to the agricultural industry of this country." In February 1849, after the death of Lord George Bentinck, the Protectionist leader returned to the subject. "I hear it said," were his words, "that Free Trade has been adopted, and that we must proceed in that course. *Vestigia nulla retrorsum.* From that doctrine I dissent." Again, in 1850, he assured the Peers that "Parliament would have to retrace the steps they had taken, and revert to a sounder and wiser policy." In April 1851, after his failure to form a Government, Lord Stanley spoke in Merchant Taylors' Hall, and said, "My own views undoubtedly are that there is no course so simple and effective for removing agricultural distress, and at the same time for returning to a sounder system, as by the imposing of moderate duties on foreign imports." His adherence to Protection was the reason why Mr. Gladstone refused to join him in 1851, and why Lord Palmerston refused to join him in 1852. But if the new Prime Minister was a resolute Protectionist, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer was not. So far from having any belief in Protection, he had an active and intelligent belief the other way. He was not addicted to the investigation of statistics, or to the study of economic science. But there is conclusive evidence that he understood the particular question of Free Trade, not a very abstruse or recondite one, as thoroughly as Mr. Cobden himself. In the year 1821 he published a curious imitation of *Gulliver's Travels*, called *Popanilla*, written in his very worst and most affected style, but containing a satire on Protection which would have satisfied Ebenezer

Disraeli's position.

1852. Elliott himself. Whatever may have been Mr. Disraeli's motives for attacking Sir Robert Peel in 1846, they had nothing to do with the "remainder biscuit," as he called it, of political economy. He was the one real free trader in Lord Derby's first Administration.

Lord Derby's first appearance as Premier.

Lord Derby's official statement in the House of Lords on the 27th of February 1852 was a cautious, trimming performance, which provoked much natural criticism. Lord Derby may have been "the Rupert of debate." But his political career was tortuous and devious, suggestive of anything rather than a cavalry leader's breakneck charge. He began by telling the House of Lords that the change of Government was a complete surprise to him. So little did he expect it that he had gone to pay a visit in the country. He forgot that Lord Naas, whom he had just made Chief Secretary for Ireland, moved in the House of Commons a vote of censure on Lord Clarendon the day before the defeat on the Militia Bill for bribing the venal editor of a disreputable paper in Dublin. Lord Clarendon was saved by a masterly speech from Lord John Russell, unsurpassed as a chivalrous defence of an absent colleague undoubtedly in the wrong. But the motion was intended to destroy the Government. Proceeding, Lord Derby declared for a foreign policy of peace and non-intervention, which makes it the more strange that he should have invited the assistance of Lord Palmerston. The Navy, he said, had never been more effective, and the Army was satisfactory in everything but numbers. To remove that defect, a Militia Bill would be introduced. Foreign refugees were warned, in language which might have been dictated by Count Buol, the Austrian Ambassador, that they must not abuse the hospitality of Great Britain on pain

of being denounced to their own Governments. A Ministry without a majority should, said the Premier, confine itself chiefly to legal and social reforms. Parliamentary reform would be dropped, and education was declared to be the business of the clergy. On the crucial subject of Protection. Lord Derby was ambiguous. He did indeed compare the American tariff favourably with our own, and express his personal opinion in favour of a duty on foreign corn. But he added that no such duty could be imposed without taking the sense of the country at a general election. Lord Aberdeen, while cordially assenting to Lord Derby's foreign policy, protested with equal warmth against the suggested revival of the Corn Laws. This double declaration is most important in view of what subsequently occurred. Finally, being challenged by Lord Beaumont to say what the Government intended to do, Lord Derby replied that they proposed to erect a barrier against democratic influence. "There is nothing," said the greatest of conservatives, "so mischievous in the people's choice as the existence of any human power capable of resisting it." [1]

1852.

The need for a general election.

Stemming the tide of democracy.

Lord Derby had in February 1852 two honest and straightforward courses open to him. The more honest, and the more straightforward, would have been to dissolve Parliament at once, and appeal to the country for a majority in favour of Protection. He would almost certainly have been beaten, but there would have been no humiliation in his defeat. As he shrank from taking the plunge, he should have frankly acknowledged that the revival of Protection was impossible, and have accepted the Act of 1846, as Peel accepted the Act of 1832. Unfortunately for himself, and for his fame, he took neither the one line nor the other.

Lord Derby's two courses.

[1] Burke's Letter on the Duration of Parliaments, 13th April 1780.

1852. He remained in office, and evaded the question of Free Trade. It has been urged that Lord Derby had as much right as Sir Robert Peel to change his mind. Certainly he had. But there is no evidence that he did change his mind, and a good deal of evidence that he did not. Peel had nothing to gain by his conversion. He was turned out almost immediately after it. Lord Derby had everything to gain by dropping Protection, as we may be sure that Mr. Disraeli was not slow to remind him. Meanwhile, the Anti-Corn Law League was revived at Manchester, and twenty-seven thousand pounds were subscribed in the room.

Revival of the Anti-Corn Law League. March 2.

Circumstances were at first highly favourable to the new Government. On the 29th of March Mr. Walpole, the Home Secretary, introduced the new Militia Bill, which provided for raising eighty thousand militiamen in two years for five years' service. It was to be, as Lord Palmerston had proposed, a national, not a local, force, and there was to be no ballot unless voluntary enlistment failed. The second reading of this Bill was taken on the 23rd of April, when Lord John Russell, separating himself from many of his colleagues, committed the great mistake of opposing it. Cobden and the Radicals were quite consistent in voting against this Bill, as they had voted against Lord John's. But Lord John's opposition appeared to be purely factious, and it seriously diminished his authority as a leader. Mr. Walpole, on the other hand, incurred some good-humoured ridicule by proposing a clause, afterwards dropped, for giving every militiaman a vote after two years' training. "Only think," said Macaulay, "of measuring a man for the franchise, . . . the Derby-Walpole qualifications to be youth, ignorance, thoughtlessness, a roving disposition, and five feet two." [1] Lord Palmer-

The new Militia Bill.

Lord John's blunder.

[1] *Macaulay's Works*, vol. viii. p. 424. Speech made on his re-election for Edinburgh.

ston, of course, made the most of Lord John's inconsistency, and the Government had an unexpected majority of 196. In the House of Lords the Duke of Wellington strongly supported the Bill, and it became law. That the fears of French invasion were a groundless panic, Mr. Cobden was quite right in maintaining. On this subject there is a very good letter from Lord Malmesbury to Lord Derby, printed in *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*.[1] "Louis Napoleon," says Lord Malmesbury, "has no natural dislike to the English. Ever since I knew him, he courted their society, and imitated their habits. Twenty years ago, when he could not have been playing a part with me, who had even less chance of being Foreign Secretary than he of being Emperor, he always said that his uncle's great mistake was not being friends with England." As for the Bill, it did neither harm nor good, and the whole controversy was a storm in a teacup. A far better plan, providing for a permanent reserve, was drawn up by Prince Albert, and shown to Lord Derby, who hastily put it in his pocket, lest it should interfere with his own measure. The formation of a reserve was left for wiser men in better times.

1852.

The fear of French invasion.

Sir John Pakington was even more successful with New Zealand than Mr. Walpole was with the Militia. He took up and passed, with some alterations, the Bill left by his predecessor, for giving a Constitution to that colony. The Whigs had intended to do this in 1848. But in consequence of difficulties with the Maoris, the educated and intelligent natives of the country, it had been thought necessary to postpone the grant for five years. Sir George Grey, the prince of Colonial Governors,[2] now reported that the experiment could

The Constitution of New Zealand.

[1] Vol. i. p. 356.

[2] Sir George was in no way related to the Home Secretary of the same name.

1852. safely be tried, and New Zealand was put on the same footing as Australia. The islands were divided into seven provinces, each with a legislature, and with a superintendent, to be elected by the people, and not, as first proposed, appointed by the Governor. The Colonial Legislature was to consist of two Chambers. Lord John Russell supported the Bill. The only opposition came from Sir William Molesworth, who objected to the provincial Legislatures, on the ground that New Zealand was as compact and homogeneous as Great Britain.

This year a difficulty with the United States about Canadian and Newfoundland Fisheries nearly led to war. Daniel Webster, the celebrated American orator, inflamed the passions of his countrymen, and Sir John Pakington's inexperience led him to put forward unfounded claims. But Webster suddenly died, and after his death the matter was peacefully settled by President Fillmore. It produced a curious outburst of petulance from Mr. Disraeli, who wrote to Lord Malmesbury on the 13th of August 1852, "The Fisheries affair is a bad business. Pakington's circular is not written with a thorough knowledge of the circumstances. He is out of his depth, more than three marine miles from Shore. These wretched colonies will all be independent too in a few years, and are a millstone round our necks." [1]

Disraeli's opinion of the Colonies.

The policy of the Opposition was two-fold. They demanded, first, a clear declaration in favour of Free Trade, or against it, and, secondly, an immediate appeal to the constituent bodies, not then called constituencies. When, therefore, on the 10th of May, Mr. Disraeli proposed that the seats

The policy of the Opposition.

[1] Mr. Disraeli lived to change his opinion upon the value of Colonies. Lord Malmesbury deliberately published the letter thirty-two years after it was written, and three years after his old colleague's death.

taken from the corrupt boroughs of Sudbury and St. Albans should be conferred upon South Lancashire, and the West Riding of Yorkshire, Mr. Gladstone objected. The proposition in itself was reasonable enough. But Mr. Gladstone's argument was that a Government on sufferance had only the right to deal with necessary business, and he carried his point by a majority of 86. The Government, however, did not resign or dissolve, and two days afterwards they defeated the Opposition. Mr. Milner Gibson, a cynic rather than an enthusiast, but a thoroughly consistent Radical, brought forward his regular motion for the repeal of the "taxes on knowledge." These were the paper duty, the duty on advertisements, and the newspaper stamp. Between them they made a cheap Press almost impossible, and gave a practical monopoly to the *Times*, then at the height of its power under the able management of Mr. Delane and Mr. Mowbray Morris. Mr. Disraeli wisely abstained from arguing the question on its merits. Indeed, he admitted that the taxes were in themselves bad. He simply pleaded that as Chancellor of the Exchequer he could not spare a million and a half, and the plea sufficed. A few days before this, he had introduced his Budget. In the Budget itself there was nothing remarkable. He simply proposed to renew the expiring income tax for a year, as otherwise he would have a deficit of two millions, and Mr. Hume's committee had not yet reported. But the speech was a surprise to friend and foe. From a serious point of view it was one of the ablest he ever delivered, and it was a complete vindication of Free Trade. By an array of facts and figures which could not be answered or displaced the most brilliant antagonist of Sir Robert Peel proved to the House of Commons, in which they had fought so many battles, that the cheap-

1852.

The taxes on knowledge.

April 30.

Disraeli's first Budget.

1852. ness and abundance resulting from the repeal of Protective duties had stimulated the general prosperity of the nation, and done invaluable good to the working classes in particular. Loud and frequent was the applause from the benches of the Peelites, and of the Whigs, while the Protectionists listened in gloomy silence.[1]

The case of the Mathers. Lord Malmesbury did not increase the popularity of the Government by his conduct of Mr. Mather's case, which was sadly bungled. The cause of this dispute arose before the Tories came into office, but they had to settle it. Mr. Mather, a young Englishman staying in Florence, got in the way of an Austrian regiment, headed by its band. An Austrian officer cut him down with his sword, inflicting a serious wound. The officer was tried by Court Martial, and acquitted. Mr. Mather's father demanded through the British Government compensation to the amount of five thousand pounds. The Austrian troops had no legitimate business in Florence at all. They were there to prop up the Grand Duke of Tuscany on his pinchbeck throne. Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli were always rather Austrian than Italian in their sympathies. But Lord Malmesbury was anxious not to recognise the right of the Austrian troops in Florence, and directed Mr. Scarlett, who had temporary charge of the Florentine Legation in the absence of Sir Henry Bulwer, to obtain redress from the Tuscan Government. Five hundred pounds was the sum for which Lord Malmesbury stipulated. He was, however, a novice in diplomacy,

[1] Lord Derby did not like it at all. "Disraeli's speech on introducing his Budget," says Lord Malmesbury (*Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 332), "has produced a bad effect on the country, for the farmers, though reconciled to giving up Protection [this was hardly so], expected some relief in other ways, and he does not give a hint at any measure for their advantage. I fear this will tell at the next election. I expect we shall be turned out before December." This was not a bad prophecy, as prophecies go.

and he committed the serious blunder of pressing Mr. Scarlett to arrange the matter before Sir Henry Bulwer returned. In his private diary he complains that the affair gave him a great deal of trouble, and his real opinion seems to have been that Mr. Mather should have called his assailant out. Harassed and worried, Mr. Scarlett accepted two hundred and fifty pounds from the Grand Duke, not as a right, but as an act of pure grace and favour. He had to be disavowed, and Sir Henry Bulwer, when he came back, succeeded in obtaining reparation. To have sued an Austrian officer in a Tuscan Court would have been a farce. Public opinion was inclined to hold that the claim should have been pressed directly upon Austria, and Lord Malmesbury was depicted by *Punch* in the act of blacking the Emperor's boots. The opportunity was not lost upon Lord Palmerston, who made the best of it in the House of Commons. Lord Malmesbury meant well, and he was not wanting in firmness. But, for a man of the world, he was strangely awkward and maladroit. 1852.

The spring of 1852 was saddened by a disaster which remains one of the proudest memories in the annals of the British Army. Her Majesty's troopship *Birkenhead* sailed from Queenstown on the 7th of January with reinforcements for the Kaffir War. She had on board nineteen officers, and nearly five hundred men, besides the crew, with women and children. On the 23rd of February, such was the rate of progress in those days, the *Birkenhead* arrived at Simon's Bay, where some of the women were landed. At six o'clock in the morning of the 25th she left Simon's Town for Algoa Bay. Between two and three the next morning she struck on a rock and sank in a very short time. Some of the soldiers were drowned in their berths. The survivors mustered on deck, The loss of the *Birkenhead*.

1852. and awaited orders. The women and children were placed in the cutter, and their lives were saved. According to the testimony of the captain, "there was not a murmur or a cry among them until the vessel made her final plunge. All the officers received their orders and had them carried out, as if the men were embarking instead of going to the bottom. There was only this difference, that I never saw any embarkation conducted with so little noise and confusion." The soldiers went down with the ship, and two-thirds of them, including their colonel, were drowned. The Duke of Wellington referred to this splendid catastrophe at the last dinner of the Royal Academy he lived to attend. It was observed that he said nothing about the courage of the men, which he seemed to take for granted, but dwelt exclusively upon their discipline and subordination. Those qualities have seldom indeed been put to so severe a test. But

> There rose no murmur from the ranks, no thought,
> By shameful strength, unhonoured life to seek;
> Our post to quit we were not trained, nor taught
> To trample down the weak.[1]

The General Election. The Parliament of 1847 was dissolved on the 1st of July 1852. Its last session had not been barren, for some legal reforms of great utility were carried out by the Chancellor, Lord St. Leonards.[2] Those over-paid and under-worked officers of the law, the Masters in Chancery, were abolished. The jurisdiction of County Courts was further extended. The Common Law Procedure Act put an end to the iniquitous old system of special pleading, of which the records are written in Meeson and Welsby. There are rational lawyers who still think that the system established by the Common Law Procedure

[1] Sir Francis Doyle.

[2] One effect of these reforms was to destroy those time-honoured "legal persons," John Doe and Richard Roe.

Acts, though it only lasted for about twenty years, was the best and simplest that has ever been devised. The first effective measure against corrupt practices had been introduced by Lord John Russell before he left office. He continued to take charge of it in Opposition, and successfully carried it into law. But reforms of this kind, in which both parties concur, have little influence at a General Election. Much was made on the hustings of Lord Malmesbury's failure to protect British subjects abroad after the Palmerstonian fashion. But the chief subject was Protection of another kind, and here the Government was more elusive than Proteus. The Prime Minister, being a Peer, was muzzled by the Constitution. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said as little about the subject as he decently could. It was his deliberate judgment that the farmers threw away their last chance at the General Election of 1847. Other Ministers were less discreet. The most thorough-going Protectionists among them were Mr. Herries, the President of the Board of Control; Mr. Christopher, the Chancellor of the Duchy; and Sir Fitzroy Kelly, the Solicitor-General, who forgot that he had held the same office under Sir Robert Peel. But as a general rule the Tory candidates for counties were Protectionists, and the Tory candidates for boroughs were free traders. Mr. Christopher, who sat for Lincolnshire, declared that he trusted Lord Derby, and that Lord Derby would never abandon Protection. Lord Derby abandoned Protection, but Mr. Christopher did not abandon Lord Derby. At this election the Tories gained several seats, but, as Lord Derby had anticipated in the House of Lords, there was no Protectionist majority. In Great Britain Ministerialists and Opposition were almost exactly equal, though all supporters of the Government were not opposed to Free Trade. The balance was held by Ireland,

1852.

A Government with two voices.

Town and county politics.

1852.

The Irish casting vote.

Macaulay's re-election.

where there had been some rioting, and, thanks to the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, much priestly intimidation. No leading Protectionist or Conservative lost his seat, while Sir George Grey, Mr. Cardwell, and Mr. Cornewall Lewis were defeated by Ministerial candidates. The most notable feature of the election, however, was the return of Macaulay at the head of the poll for Edinburgh. His triumph was the more conspicuous because he had refused to be a candidate, or to appear in the city, and had even declined to answer the question how he would vote on the subject of Maynooth.[1] His fame had become a national possession, and he was elected as a great Englishman. Unfortunately the renewal of his relations with Edinburgh was coincident with the sudden failure of his health, and he was never again able to take an active part in public affairs. Lord Palmerston was of course re-elected for Tiverton after the most amusing of his many verbal encounters with Rowcliffe the butcher, whose presence at Tiverton meetings was as much part of the show as Lord Palmerston's own.[2]

Death of the Duke.

The great event of the period between the election and the meeting of the New Parliament was the Duke of Wellington's death, which occurred at Walmer Castle on the 14th of September, in his eighty-fourth year. His funeral in St. Paul's, attended by both Houses, was not held till the 18th of November. The Poet Laureate celebrated it in a magnificent poem,

[1] It was his vote on Maynooth which lost him his seat in 1847.

[2] Palmerston could not be idle, or let the affairs of Europe alone. On the 10th of May, though out of office, and a mere private individual, he drew up in very choice Italian for Count Aquila, the Neapolitan Minister in London, a Memorandum strongly recommending the King of Naples to grant a general amnesty of political prisoners on pain of forfeiting the British alliance. The advice was not taken, and it may be doubted whether King Ferdinand ever saw the paper. He would have paid very little attention to it if he had.

not written to order, but the spontaneous expression of his own feelings. Lord Derby, in a very beautiful speech, described the patience with which the Duke, despite his deafness, listened attentively to the remarks of the youngest Peer, and, striking a higher note, said with perfect truth that they had buried in their illustrious hero the man among them who had the greatest horror of war. Lord John Russell had already paid his tribute at Stirling in the most eloquent of all his orations. In the House of Commons Mr. Disraeli made the curious and unaccountable blunder of borrowing his peroration from the eulogy of M. Thiers on Marshall Gouvion de St. Cyr. He explained that he had copied the passage into his Commonplace Book, and mistaken it for his own. But as M. Thiers did not speak English, the explanation was not felt to be explanatory. The Duke of Wellington's unparalleled career falls almost wholly beyond the scope of this work. His military fame stands out clearer and higher with the progress of criticism and the lapse of time. But his campaigns ended in 1815, when he was forty-six, and he never afterwards took the field. His political creed was a high and dry Toryism, modified by a keen perception of what was possible at the moment, which always guided his practical conduct. His last great service to the State consisted in helping Peel to carry the Corn Bill, not because he believed in Free Trade, but because the Queen's Government had to be carried on. After that, though he remained at the head of the army, he was little more than a figure-head, receiving, without appearing to notice it, the homage of all classes, and the unbounded deference of Whig or Tory Ministers. He was succeeded as Commander-in-Chief by Lord Hardinge, a devoted Peelite, and Peel's most intimate friend. The University of Oxford elected the Prime Minister

1852.
Nov. 15.
Sept. 21.
Nov. 15. Disraeli's plagiarism.
The Duke's old age.

1852.

as their new Chancellor, and were saved from the false quantities which they had endured with amused tolerance in the Duke. But the Duke's place in England could not really be filled. There had been nothing like it before, and there has been nothing like it since.

The critical condition of the Government.

The new Parliament met on the 4th of November. When the results of the General Election were fully known, it became evident that the Government of Lord Derby was in what mathematicians call unstable equilibrium. Greville tells a curious story, which illustrates the critical condition of the Ministry. The British Ambassador at Paris, the second Lord Cowley, had been appointed by Lord Granville. Lord Derby wrote to him, and asked for his proxy.[1] Cowley objected, alleging that his position as Ambassador severed him from party politics. But Derby persisted, saying that "he was placed in a very difficult position, not even knowing that he had a majority in the House of Lords, and as he considered this the last chance of establishing a Conservative Government in this country, he felt bound to make every exertion to maintain himself in power, and he intimated as much as that on his consent to give his proxy would depend his retaining the Embassy."[2] The proxy was finally given by Cowley to his uncle the Duke of Wellington, who died before Parliament met. But the incident is significant, and so is Lord Derby's language. On the other hand, the Opposition were far from being united. There was great discontent with Lord John Russell's leadership, and many Whigs declared that they would follow him no more. Lord John

Lord Crowley's proxy.

The discordance of the Opposition.

[1] A proxy, now obsolete, was the right of voting in the name of the Peer who gave it.

[2] "Greville Memoirs," 28th August 1852.

himself talked about "intrigues," and was encouraged to believe in them by his father-in-law, Lord Minto. But there seems to have been no intrigue, only a general loss of confidence, not in the circumstances surprising, as Lord John did not know his own mind, and wavered from week to week. On the 13th of August he had written, with singular want of prescience, to Lord Aberdeen, saying that he would not lead the House of Commons for a Premier in the House of Lords. On the 3rd of October he told Lord Minto that he would not serve under a Peer younger than himself, by which he meant that he would serve under Lord Lansdowne. Meanwhile, on the 17th of September, Lord Palmerston met the Duke of Bedford at Brocket, and said frankly that, while he would act as Lord John's colleague, he would not again be his subordinate. He had, however, been much gratified by Lord John's willingness to serve under Lord Lansdowne, and remarked that for the first time he now saw daylight in public affairs.

1852.

Lord John's vacillation.

Palmerston's attitude.

But there was a preliminary step to be taken, and it was not quite so easy as it seemed to get rid of Lord Derby's Government. The Queen's Speech, delivered on the 11th of November, contained a paragraph, "as ambiguous as words could make it," on the subject of Free Trade. Her Majesty was made to say that if the beneficial effects of recent legislation on the industrial classes had been accompanied by injury to others, compensation might have to be provided. Lord Derby held out no hope of reviving Protection. But it was deemed necessary to extract some definite statement from Ministers, and accordingly Mr. Charles Villiers was entrusted with a motion which described the repeal of the Corn Laws as a "just, wise, and beneficial measure." These "three

The Queen's Speech.

Charles Villiers' motion.

1852. odious epithets," as the Protectionists called them, were introduced with the approval of Lord John Russell and Sir James Graham. In truth, there was equally little reason for objecting to the epithets, and for insisting upon them. The success of Free Trade was patent, the abandonment of Protection was complete, and no epithets, odious or otherwise, could alter the facts, which spoke for themselves. The debate, which began on the 23rd of November, and lasted for three nights, was extremely brilliant, but it cannot be called practical. Mr. Villiers was well qualified to move, for he was even then the oldest in standing of the free traders in Parliament. To his motion Mr. Disraeli proposed an amendment in favour of "unrestricted competition," as favourable to the working classes. Against Mr. Disraeli's amendment Mr. Villiers' motion would probably have been carried. But Lord Palmerston came to the rescue of the Government with a formula which he offered in substitution for Mr. Disraeli's. This was substantially the original motion without the "odious epithets," and Mr. Disraeli eagerly accepted it. It was carried by a majority of 80, and the Government was saved. But they did not escape castigation. Lord Granby, one of the "Triumvirate" who led the Protectionists in Opposition, had been left out of the Government. He now asked Mr. Disraeli and his colleagues why, if all these fine results had followed from Free Trade, they did not express in public their respect for the wisdom and foresight of Sir Robert Peel. The shot went home. There was a loud outburst of applause. Sir John Pakington declared that no word of disrespect for Sir Robert Peel had ever escaped his lips, and that in his opinion a purer patriot never lived. Mr. Sidney Herbert, incidentally remarking that he had never

Palmerston's amendment.

A tribute to the memory of Peel.

suspected Mr. Disraeli of believing in Protection, recalled the fact that he had heard Sir Robert Peel attacked by the Protectionists in the vilest language, and accused of the meanest crimes. The last thing, he said, that Peel ever desired was the humiliation of his adversaries. "But," he exclaimed, pointing to the Treasury Bench, "if you want to see humiliation, which, God knows, is always a painful sight, you have only to look there." Mr. Gladstone, much to Cobden's disgust, joined Mr. Herbert in supporting Lord Palmerston's amendment, and earnestly deprecating a spirit of revenge. Lord John Russell voted with Mr. Villiers. After some discussion, and much manœuvring, a similar motion in favour of Free Trade was unanimously passed by the House of Lords. Protection was not merely dead. It was buried. 1852

The end of Protection;

So was the French Republic. On the 2nd of December 1852, the anniversary of the *coup d'état*, the assumption of the Imperial title by Louis Napoleon was announced, and on the 6th it was communicated to both Houses of Parliament. Mr. Disraeli contented himself with a bare statement of the fact. Lord Malmesbury, on the contrary, thought fit to deliver a glowing encomium of a man whom most Englishmen, and some of the best Frenchmen, regarded as a liar, a murderer, and a thief. The recognition of the Empire was a matter of course, for the form of government chosen by France was no business of ours. But the Foreign Secretary gave great and just offence by going out of his way to extol the ruthless slaughterer of his countrymen, the robber of the Orleanist estates, and the violator of the Constitution he had sworn to observe. The formal extinction of liberty in France was a strange subject for rejoicing in a free country, and a nation

and of the French Republic.

Lord Malmesbury's eulogy of Louis Napoleon.

1852. which had just buried Wellington was not inclined to gush over Napoleon the Little. The voice of the French people, however, was overwhelmingly decisive. Nearly eight millions voted for the establishment of the Imperial dynasty, already decreed by the Senate. Only a quarter of a million voted against it. Some difficulty was at first caused by the title Napoleon the Third.[1] But the Emperor explained that he made no retrospective claims. He acknowledged all previous governments, and their acts. He only desired to be regarded as the lineal successor of Napoleon Bonaparte and the Duke of Reichstadt. The Emperor had at that time no idea of invading England. As soon would a converted burglar, anxious to make his way into the best society of a cathedral town, have begun by stealing the cathedral plate. He had insisted upon his Ambassador, Count Walewski, attending the Duke of Wellington's funeral. Walewski at first demurred. But his scruples were quieted by Baron Brunnow, the Ambassador of Russia, who said to him, "My dear Count, if this ceremony were intended to bring the Duke to life again, I could understand your objections. But as it is only to bury him, I don't see why you should mind." The professed friendship of the Emperor was much more dangerous to England than his supposed enmity. He was incapable of being either a real enemy or a true friend.

Napoleon the Third.

Meanwhile the fate of Lord Derby's Government was being decided in the House of Commons. The Queen's Speech promised measures of relief to distressed interests. These measures were expounded in a financial statement, delivered at a most unusual time, the last month of the year.

Disraeli's second Budget.

Dec. 3.

[1] Said to have been first used unintentionally by an enthusiastic Prefect, who ended an official document with the words Vive Napoléon, and added three notes of admiration ! ! !

In expounding them Mr. Disraeli spoke for more than five hours. Macaulay, a man of letters, said that he could have done it in two. Cobden, a man of business, pronounced that an hour and twenty minutes would have been enough. Mr. Disraeli went solemnly through the interests to be relieved, one by one. There was shipping, there was sugar, there was land. Shipping would be freed from light-duties, to the amount of a hundred thousand pounds. The producers of West Indian sugar would be allowed to refine it in bond, a concession which Greville describes as a drop of water to one dying of thirst. Those whom it concerned repudiated it as trivial and puerile. Coming to the land, Mr. Disraeli elicited much ironical cheering from the other side by the announcement that there would be no change in local taxation, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer before he took office had repeatedly attacked as scandalously unjust. Then he came to the real remissions. Half the duty on malt was to be taken off. The tea duty, which stood at 2s. 2½d. in the pound, was to be gradually reduced for six years until it reached a shilling. These two indulgences would cost something between three and four millions. The Committee were told that exemptions from direct taxes were bad, and that the limit of exemption from the income tax would be fixed at a hundred a year for industrial incomes, or fifty pounds for realised property. Farmers would be allowed to compute their profits at a third of their rent instead of half. Ireland had hitherto been entirely free from income tax. It would in future be levied upon the funded property and the salaries of Irishmen. The house tax, which Sir Charles Wood had substituted for the window tax, would be doubled in amount, and the limit of exemption lowered from twenty pounds of annual value to

1852.

1852. ten. Except for the reduction of the tea duty, this was one of the worst Budgets ever brought in. There was, indeed, no sort of Protection in it. The malt tax, like the tea duty, was paid by the consumer. The house tax is direct, but it fell with crushing severity upon the poor, and to double it for the purpose of halving the malt tax was fantastic. The Budget simply bristled with vulnerable points. Even Sir Charles Wood felt able to jeer at it, and to suggest that it should be withdrawn. Mr. Goulburn and Mr. Gladstone denounced the special tax upon Irish fund-holders as a breach of public faith. Protectionists asked where was the Protection, and free traders asked where was the sense. The debate was long and acrimonious. At length, late at night on the 16th of December, Mr. Disraeli rose to reply. He soon left the uncongenial fields of finance, and turned upon his assailants with marvellous energy. He called Mr. Goulburn a weird Sibyl. He assured Sir Charles Wood that petulance was not sarcasm, and that insolence was not invective. He told Sir James Graham that he regarded him, but did not respect him. He flung his missiles right and left without much heeding where they fell. When he sat down the Committee was to divide. But suddenly Mr. Gladstone rose, at two in the morning, with the emphatic remark that such a speech must be answered at once, and on the spot. This was the beginning of the long duel which lasted, with some intermission,[1] while Mr. Disraeli remained in the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone protested, in sentences constantly interrupted by tumultuous cheering and counter-cheering, that the characters of men who had been long in the public service were entitled to esteem, and that offences against good taste became infinitely graver when

Disraeli's reply.

Gladstone's retort.

[1] From 1855 to 1859.

committed by the Leader of the House of Commons. Of the Budget he said that it consecrated the principle of a deficiency, that it provided no real surplus at all, and that it juggled with taxation without any attempt at improvement or reform. When the Committee divided there were 593 members present, and the Budget was rejected by a majority of 19. Lord Derby and his colleagues at once resigned. 1852.

The Government left Europe at peace, and foreign affairs, so far as this country was concerned, in a satisfactory condition. By the Treaty of London the Danish question was settled for a time, the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein being incorporated with the kingdom of Denmark, and secured under a guarantee of the Five Powers to the inheritance of Prince Christian, afterwards King. Lord Malmesbury did not understand diplomacy, nor the art of writing despatches, though he had edited so many. But he knew his own mind, and the permanent staff of the Foreign Office, very competent judges, thought more highly of him than did the general public. The great event of Lord Derby's first Administration, the conquest of Lower Burmah, was one with which the Cabinet had little or nothing to do. Mr. Bright raised a laugh in the House of Commons by referring to Mr. Herries as the "Governor of our Indian possessions." It is doubtful whether the Governor of our Indian possessions realised that such a person as Mr. Herries existed. Lord Dalhousie always kept on good terms with the Directors. But he governed India, and if any one had interfered with him he would have come home. There was no telegraph to India then, and the "Governor-General in Council" was in Lord Dalhousie's time a synonym for the Governor-General. Ever since the conclusion of peace with Burmah in 1826, there had been

Lord Derby's resignation.

The conquest of Lower Burmah.

1852. complaints that the King of Ava ill-treated British subjects, and did not keep his word. There is no evidence that Lord Dalhousie wished for annexation. But he certainly did not shrink from it, and he foresaw that the whole of Burmah would one day become British, though he hoped that that would not be in his time. In the summer of 1851 two captains of British vessels were imprisoned on false and flimsy charges at Rangoon, "the City of Victory." The British residents at Rangoon sent a petition for redress to the Governor-General. Lord Dalhousie at once despatched Commodore Lambert, of H.M.S. *Fox*, with two steamers, to demand reparation. The envoys having been treated with indignity, the Irawaddy was blockaded, and a Burmese ship was captured as ransom. The original compensation asked was nine thousand pounds.

Feb. 18. Failing to obtain it, Lord Dalhousie issued an ultimatum demanding an apology, a fine of ten million rupees,[1] the dismissal of the Governor who had insulted British seamen, and the establishment of a British Resident, as provided by the Treaty of 1826, which had never been carried out. These terms were to be accepted before the 1st of April. The alternative was war. One of Lord Dalhousie's biographers, Sir Edwin Arnold, is inclined to believe that at this point war might have been avoided. The King did not reject the Governor-General's proposals. He vacillated and temporised. Lord Dalhousie behaved with perfect fairness, and waited for the specified day. But he was a man of decisive action, and he was probably not sorry to have a final settlement of long-standing disputes. Certainly he lost no time. On the 5th of April Martaban was taken. The bloodiest and most obstinate fighting occurred round the Pagoda, the Temple-Fortress of Rangoon, which was apparently

[1] One million sterling.

impregnable, and was held by eighteen thousand of the best Burmese troops. Nevertheless, General Godwin succeeded in driving them out and occupying the Pagoda, with less than six thousand men of the East India Company's forces. It was a most brilliant feat of arms, and it decided the war. When Lord Dalhousie himself arrived at Rangoon on the 27th of July, he said, "General, I cannot conceive how you got in there." Lord Dalhousie knew how to say things, and also when to say them. Hostilities dragged on for some months, but the loss of life, though serious, was much diminished by the Governor-General's admirable arrangements for supplying the troops with tents, food, and medicines. No campaign was ever better managed in these essential respects. After the fall of the Pagoda, General Godwin had the command of the river from Rangoon to Prome. Prome was occupied in October, Pegu in November, and on the 20th of December the whole of Lower Burmah was annexed by proclamation to the British Crown. An indemnity of a million and a half sterling was also exacted. The Directors were for annexing the whole of Burmah, but against this policy Lord Dalhousie protested as premature, and he had his way. He had now been five years at Calcutta, and would in the ordinary course have come home. But he sacrificed his life to India, and stayed for another term. In April of the same year from which dates this addition to British rule in India, the independence of the Transvaal Boers was recognised by General Sir George Cathcart, Governor of Cape Colony, under the Sand River Convention.[1] This policy was adopted for the sole reason that British interests demanded the

1852.

Lower Burmah annexed to the British Crown.

[1] Approved by Sir John Pakington as Secretary of State for the Colonies in June. It acknowledged "the right of the emigrant farmers beyond the Vaal to manage their own affairs."

1852. strict limitation of the Queen's sovereignty in South Africa, and not from any tenderness for the Boers.

The new Irish party. The Parliament of 1852 was the first in which the principle of tenant right for Ireland was formulated by an organised band of Irish members. They voted against Mr. Disraeli's Budget, and thus determined the fate of Lord Derby's Government. According to Sir Charles Gavan Duffy,[1] they were guided solely by the attitude of the Irish tenant right. Government towards tenant right. Mr. Sharman Crawford had brought in a Bill giving the Irish tenant a right to compensation for his improvements. He had, however, no seat in the new House of Commons, and his place was taken by Serjeant Shee. The Serjeant's Bill was by arrangement read a second time, and referred to the same Committee with four Bills for amending the Land Laws which had been introduced by Sir Joseph Napier, then the eloquent Attorney-General for Ireland. Private negotiations were set on foot, says Sir Charles Duffy, with a member of the Cabinet,[2] and the Irish demanded as the price of their votes the adoption by the Government of the Tenant Right Bill. It is probable, though not certain, that Mr. Disraeli consented to this bargain. But the Irish Government objected, the landlords took fright, and on the 10th of December Lord Roden put a specific question to Lord Derby. On this occasion Lord Derby spoke out. He said that nothing would induce him to support the Bill, which he regarded as inconsistent with the rights of property. So Gavan Duffy, and Lucas, and their friends voted with the Opposition. Among the majority may also be found the notorious names of John Sadleir and William Keogh. Isaac Butt, on the other hand, then a Tory and always

Lord Derby's repudiation.

[1] *League of the North and South*, pp. 234–235. [2] Mr. Disraeli.

a Protectionist, voted with the Government. It may be doubted whether Lord Derby knew that there had been any dealings with the Irish. For though, in announcing his resignation to the House of Lords, he took the unusual and not very dignified course of protesting against the combination of parties to upset his Ministry, he made no reference to the fact that Ireland had turned the scale. The charge of combination, if it be a charge, was easily answered. For the Peelites had combined with Lord Palmerston in defence of the Government against the motion of Mr. Villiers. 1852.

The controversies which afterwards agitated the Church of England on the subject of ritual may be said to date from the institution of the Rev. W. J. E. Bennett to the vicarage of Frome in Somerset by Bishop Bagot of Bath and Wells. In 1850 Mr. Bennett had, under pressure from Bishop Blomfield, resigned the perpetual curacy of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, which included the Church of St. Barnabas, Pimlico, and he had been charged by the Bishop, himself a High Churchman, with Romanising practices. When, therefore, his appointment was announced, in 1852, there was considerable outcry, and Mr. Horsman brought the matter before the House of Commons. He failed in his attempt to procure a Royal Commission, which would have been a strangely inappropriate remedy, but afterwards carried against Lord Derby's Government a motion for a Select Committee. That Committee never sat, Mr. Horsman being unable to formulate his charges against the Bishop. He encountered the obstacle which has barred the way both to reform and to persecution in the Church of England — the principle of private property. The majority of English benefices are in the hands of private patrons, and the patron of Frome was then the Marchioness of Bath. Lady

Ritualism: Bennett of Frome.

April 20.

June 8.

1852.

Bath had the legal right of presenting any clerk in priest's orders to the vicarage of Frome, and if the Bishop had refused to institute Mr. Bennett, he would have been compelled to prove some definite charge against him in a court of law. Bishop Bagot, going further than he need have gone, gave it as his opinion that Mr. Bennett had a firm and deep-rooted attachment to the Church of England, which, according to his own idea of that Church, he doubtless had. But he was not the harbinger of peace to the parish of Frome.

Two other topics remain to be mentioned before we take leave of the year 1852. The Queen's Speech at the close of the session, delivered on the 1st of July, contained the following paragraph: "The recent discoveries of extensive goldfields have produced in the Australian colonies a temporary disturbance of society requiring prompt attention. I have taken such steps as appeared to me most urgently necessary for the mitigation of this serious evil. I shall continue anxiously to watch the important results which must follow from these discoveries." There is a commendable absence of exultation in the tone of the Ministerial language. It is to be observed that the first consequence recorded to have ensued from this discovery of gold was a breach of the peace. As for the "important results," they were chiefly two. There was a rapid influx into Australia of emigrants not much more desirable than the convicts who had been forced upon them by the mother country. There was also the phenomenon usually called a depreciation of gold. So far as this concerned gold as an ordinary article of commerce, it was of small importance to the general public. But gold being in England the standard of currency, its more plentiful supply, and increased cheapness, proportionately raised prices. Between buyer and seller

The discovery of gold in Australia.

the effect was nominal. In spite of appearances, 1852.
each really paid or received the same amount in value. Fixed incomes, however, became less valuable, and fixed charges less onerous. At the same time there has been a tendency, even among economists, to exaggerate the significance of fluctuations in the supply of gold. The enormous extension of credit, and the constant use of cheques or of bank-notes, which, though convertible, are not converted, have reduced the supply of gold indispensable for commerce to a very low level indeed. Large fortunes were made out of the Australian gold-fields, and men fought each other like wild beasts for nuggets. But the wealth of the world was not appreciably increased, and the stability of the gold standard was not sensibly impaired.

Far more important to the working classes, and to the industrial prospects of the country than any discovery of gold, was the progress of Trade Unionism, then very slow, and subject to discouraging interruptions. One of the best and strongest Unions, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, founded in 1850, was signally defeated by the employers in 1852. For three months from the 1st of January they conducted in London and Lancashire a strike which had begun with the engine-works of Messrs. Hibbert and Platt at Oldham. The Christian Socialists gave it their support, and Lord Goderich subscribed five hundred pounds to the maintenance of the strikers. But the strike utterly failed, and at the beginning of April the men returned to work on the masters' terms.[1] Combination was still in its infancy, and the capitalists had nine-tenths of the law.

[1] *History of Trade Unionism*, B. and S. Webb, p. 196.

CHAPTER XVI

THE COALITION

1852.

The choice of the Crown.

It is an established maxim of the British constitution that when a Prime Minister resigns, the Sovereign need not consult him about the choice of a successor. In these circumstances, and in these alone, the action of the Crown is absolutely unfettered. The doctrine of Ministerial responsibility is saved by throwing it upon the statesman who accepts the task of forming a new Government. Practically, however, the Royal choice is limited to the very few men who at any given time are capable of commanding a majority in the House of Commons. In December 1852 the only living Englishman who had been Prime Minister, besides Lord Derby, was Lord John Russell. But Her Majesty did not send for him, and that apparently for two reasons. First, the Tory Government had been turned out by a combination of Whigs and Peelites. Secondly, Lord John himself was distrusted not only by most Peelites, but also by many Whigs. Such being the state of the case, Her Majesty addressed a joint summons to the Marquess of Lansdowne, the oldest of the Whigs, and the Earl of Aberdeen, the oldest of the Peelites. Lord Lansdowne was prevented by illness from going to Osborne, and pleaded his health as a reason for refusing a commission to which he did not aspire. Lord Aberdeen, having first obtained

a promise of co-operation from Lord John as Foreign Secretary and leader of the House of Commons, undertook the task. 1852.

On the last day of the year 1852 the Administration of Lord Aberdeen had been completely formed, the necessary writs had been moved, and both Houses adjourned to the 10th of February 1853. Nothing could look stronger on paper than the new Government. Like the Cabinet of 1806, which, however, lasted less than a year, it was called the Ministry of All the Talents. It included, as Lord Palmerston said, every man of the first rank in the House of Commons, except Mr. Disraeli. It was almost equally divided between Whigs and Peelites. The Peelites, besides the Prime Minister, were Mr. Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer; the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary for the Colonies; Sir James Graham, who returned to the Admiralty, where he had been twenty years before, under Lord Grey; and Mr. Sidney Herbert, Secretary at War. The Whigs were the Foreign Secretary, Lord John Russell; the Lord Chancellor, Lord Cranworth; the President of the Council, Lord Granville; the Lord Privy Seal, the Duke of Argyll; the Home Secretary, Lord Palmerston; the President of the India Board, Sir Charles Wood; and Lord Lansdowne, who sat in the Cabinet without holding any office. The Radicals were represented by Sir William Molesworth, Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests. But Lord Granville, though reckoned a Whig, was an exceedingly advanced one, and belonged economically, if not altogether politically, to the Manchester School. The ablest Minister outside the Cabinet, from which he was unfortunately excluded by Whig jealousy, was a Peelite, Mr. Cardwell. Three Irish Catholics, two of whom were unwisely chosen, held subordinate posts.

Lord Aberdeen's Government.

The Peelites.

The Whigs.

1853.

The Irish Brigadiers.

Against Mr. Monsell, Clerk of the Ordnance, afterwards Lord Emly, nothing could be said. But Mr. John Sadleir, a Lord of the Treasury, who ended his life by committing suicide to escape penal servitude, first lost his seat at Carlow, and then had to leave the Government on account of the means by which he secured the suffrages of Sligo. And Mr. Keogh, the Irish Solicitor-General, though he became a Judge, never earned the respect of any class or any party in Ireland. These three appointments. so far from conciliating the Irish vote, were bitterly resented by Mr. Gavan Duffy, Mr. Frederick Lucas, and other leading members of the "Irish Brigade," otherwise called "the Pope's Brass Band." Mr. Duffy, who had been three times put on his trial for treason without result, and subsequently rose to great distinction in Australia, declared in the House of Commons that he had seen practised upon some of his colleagues corruption which recalled the days of Walpole and Pelham.[1] He explained the next day that he meant no more than the abandonment of pledges for the sake of places, which could not be alleged against Monsell, whatever might be said of Sadleir and Keogh. But Duffy and Lucas laid the foundation of the modern doctrine that an Irish Nationalist may not without disgrace accept anything from a British Government.

Gavan Duffy's charges of corruption.

Greville's estimate of the new Cabinet.

Greville, with even more than his usual shrewdness, remarks of Lord Aberdeen's Cabinet that "it will be wonderfully strong in point of ability, and in this respect exhibit a marked contrast with the last; but its very excellence in this respect may prove a source of weakness, and eventually of disunion. The late Cabinet had two paramount chiefs, and all the rest nonentities, and the nominal head

[1] Hansard, 5th May 1853.

was also a real and predominant head. In the present Cabinet are five or six first-rate men of equal or nearly equal pretensions, none of them likely to acknowledge the superiority or defer to the opinions of any other, and every one of these five or six considering himself abler and more important than their Premier."[1] Lord Aberdeen had not found it easy to form his Administration. Lord Palmerston at first refused to join it. Nor was his refusal altogether unnatural. He and Lord Aberdeen had been friends for sixty years, since they were boys at Harrow, once known as the school of Prime Ministers. But in foreign policy they were at opposite extremes, as wide apart as Metternich and Canning, and Lord Aberdeen had made incessant attacks upon Lord Palmerston's conduct of Foreign affairs. Lord Palmerston's scruples, however, were surmounted. His resumption of the Foreign Office was impossible, and like a wise man, he said that he did not desire it. He chose the Home Office, for which Sir George Grey was not at the moment available, having lost his seat in Northumberland. But of course he well knew that as a Cabinet Minister he would be able to exercise a considerable influence upon diplomatic relations. The evil genius of the Coalition was Lord John Russell. It would have been better for Lord John's own reputation, as well as for interests compared with which the reputation of any individual is small indeed, if he had refused office altogether. He held very strongly to the opinion that he ought to be Prime Minister, though, as a matter of fact, he could not have formed a Government. "When a man," says the Great Trimmer, "thinks his place below him he will be below his place." So it was with Lord John. At first he told Lord Aberdeen that he would lead the House of Commons as

1853.

Palmerston's reluctance.

His choice of the Home Office.

The position of Lord John.

[1] "Greville Memoirs," 24th December 1852.

1853.

Foreign Secretary for six weeks.

Foreign Secretary, and on that understanding Lord Aberdeen accepted the Commission of the Queen. Then Lord John discovered that the double position would be too much for him, and declined to come in at all. Lord Aberdeen should have taken him at his word. But, on the contrary, he declared that if Lord John withheld his assistance, he should give up the task. Various influences, including the eloquence of Macaulay, were brought to bear, and at last the most sensitive of public men accepted the Foreign Office, on the understanding that he should give it up a few days after the renewal of the Parliamentary session, and hand it over to Lord Clarendon. A worse arrangement could hardly have been made, and when the Queen heard of it, she was justly annoyed. Lord John even had the folly to tell the Ambassadors at their first meeting that he was a mere stop-gap, so that these high and mighty personages went away with the feeling that they had been made the victims of a practical joke. But this was only the first in a long series of fantastic tricks which a man who had been Prime Minister of England did not think it beneath him to play.

The Prime Minister.

It is time to say something of the Prime Minister himself. Lord Aberdeen, then in his sixty-ninth year, was little known to the general public. He had filled high office with distinction, and few men were better acquainted with foreign affairs. He was an indefatigable student with a retentive memory, and his knowledge was accordingly vast. He was acquainted with many countries, and his taste in art was highly esteemed by connoisseurs. His private character was not only beyond reproach, but impressed every one who came in contact with him by its austere and dignified simplicity. It was observed of him that though he never paraded his acquirements, yet, when asked for information, he

was never at a loss. The most intimate friend of Sir Robert Peel, he had been out of office since 1846, and the acknowledged head of the Peelites since 1850. Yet, staunch free trader as he was, he had acted with Lord Derby in resisting, so far as the House of Lords could resist, the universal interference of Lord Palmerston. At Haddo, his country house in Scotland, he was treated with almost patriarchal deference, and "sat in the gate" once a week to receive the complaints of his neighbours.[1] All the mental and moral qualifications of a Prime Minister Lord Aberdeen had. But there were drawbacks. He had never sat in the House of Commons. He spoke below his abilities, and had no readiness in debate. He was too much in the habit of thinking aloud, and did not sufficiently consider that it is not always expedient to say things because one honestly believes them. A better man than Lord Aberdeen there could hardly be, but his strength was not equal to his goodness. He exaggerated the importance of Lord John Russell, and suffered himself to be overborne by Lord Palmerston. On the other hand, he was sometimes too much inclined to stand upon his dignity. When the House of Lords assembled on the 10th of February, Lord Derby expressed a reasonable desire to know what the business of the session would be. But although Lord John Russell was actually making such a statement in the House of Commons, Lord Aberdeen obstinately refused to say a word. He began his new career with excellent prospects. Protection was dead. The Roman Catholics felt that Lord Aberdeen's Premiership was a guarantee against the operation of the Ecclesiastical Titles Act. The Church of England, even High Churchmen like Bishop Wilberforce, regarded Lord 1853.

[1] *The Earl of Aberdeen*, by Lord Stanmore, p. 189. Sampson Low. Second edition.

1853. Aberdeen, Presbyterian though he was, as a friend of the Church. On one point, however, he disappointed his clerical admirers, and his colleague, Mr. Gladstone. He absolutely declined to permit the revival of Convocation, except for purely formal business. His appointment of Mr. Jackson to be Bishop of Lincoln was noticed even by Charles Greville, who cared nothing for the Church, as a welcome rocognition of piety and efficiency without social or political claims.

Proposed revival of Convocation.

Fighting for the spoils. The Cabinet was not formed without bitter quarrels and dissensions. The Whigs complained loudly that there were too many Peelites, and Lord John, in the intervals of fighting for himself, fought for his friends. But the Peelites must be said to have conquered. For besides their ample representation in the Cabinet, they had the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord St. Germans, and his Chief Secretary, Sir John Young. There was some difficulty in filling the Woolsack. Lord Truro's reappointment was not desired, nor apparently suggested. Lord St. Leonards had such a high professional reputation that there was some thought of retaining him. But this was too great a departure from precedent, and Lord Cranworth received the Great Seal. Lord Cranworth, like his predecessor, was not much of a politician. But he was an excellent lawyer, an accomplished man of the world, and a most agreeable member of society. He was the only Vice-Chancellor raised to the Peerage while holding that office. The one possible objection to his appointment was that it left four pensions of five thousand a year all chargeable upon the public funds. Their holders were Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Brougham, Lord Truro, and Lord St. Leonards. Lord St. Leonards, having been ten months in office, drew his retiring allowance for nearly a quarter of a century.

The Lord Chancellor.

1853.

Feb. 10. Postponement of the Reform Bill.

The first announcement made by Lord John Russell in the House of Commons was that the Reform Bill would be postponed till next year. This was an unfortunate decision, for it was long before Parliament had another opportunity of seriously considering the subject. It was, however, to some extent justified by the apathetic indifference of the country, which the General Election of the previous summer had done nothing to dispel. The chief business of 1853 was financial, and very important it proved. But as early as the 15th of February Mr. Frederick Peel, Under-Secretary for the Colonies, introduced a Bill which raised in an acute form the question of Colonial independence. The Protestant clergy of Canada were paid from the produce of certain territories appropriated to that purpose, and known as the Clergy Reserves. Being secured by two Acts of Parliament, passed respectively in 1791 and 1840, this land was pronounced by the highest legal authority in England to be exempt from the control of the Canadian Legislature. Such an exemption could not be reconciled with the elementary principles of self-government, and Mr. Peel's Bill proposed to remove it by enabling Canada to control her relations with her own Churches. This was the first battle-ground of the Coalition and the Conservative party, who, having to choose between the Church and the Colonies, unhesitatingly chose the Church.

The Canadian Clergy Reserves.

But before this issue came to be fought out, Mr. Disraeli, the most dexterous and the least scrupulous of leaders, endeavoured to put upon the Ministry a quarrel with France. During the winter recess two members of the Cabinet, Sir James Graham and Sir Charles Wood, had expressed the opinions of English gentlemen upon the criminal Emperor of the French. Sir Charles Wood accused his Imperial Majesty of having gagged the Press.

Attacks upon the French Emperor.

1853. Sir James Graham with equal accuracy described him as having trampled upon the liberties of forty million Frenchmen. Their speeches may have been indiscreet. But whatever harm they might have done, be it much or little, was obviously and greatly increased by the debate which Mr. Disraeli thought fit to raise, and the strenuous efforts he made to prove that Ministers were the enemies of the French Empire. Greville goes so far as to say that his speech was one "of devilish malignity, quite reckless and shamelessly profligate." Without adopting that violent language one may agree that "the whole scope of it was, if possible, to envenom any bad feeling that might possibly exist between France and England." [1] But Mr. Disraeli's reputation was in those days such that his performance had no effect whatever. It was in this debate that Mr. Cobden first used his famous phrase about voting a hundred millions for the Navy. He urged, with characteristic contempt for diplomatic forms, that a friendly note should be addressed to France proposing joint disarmament. If such an overture, he said, were rejected he would be prepared to vote a hundred millions for safeguards against invasion. Cobden was a great man and an original thinker. But diplomacy was not one of the things he understood, and he failed to perceive that he was playing with edged tools. The unfavourable reception of such a note would in all probability have meant war.

Cobden's "hundred millions for the Navy."

The Canadian debates. The Rejection of the Clergy Reserves Bill was moved by Sir John Pakington, who had been Secretary for the Colonies under Lord Derby, and was regarded by some Conservatives as a more creditable Leader in the House of Commons than Mr. Disraeli. He took his stand upon the sacredness of ecclesiastical property, and was answered

[1] "Greville Memoirs," 19th Feb. 1853.

with great power by Sir William Molesworth, a true friend of the Colonies, who fully understood their wishes and requirements. The Conservatives were strangely reckless in their resistance to this measure, for the loss of it would probably have involved the loss of Canada. A community which cannot deal with its own ecclesiastical establishments has no constitutional freedom, and an adverse vote would have been regarded by all Canadians, French and English alike, as a distinct breach of faith. Sir William Molesworth shocked the proprieties of the Opposition by calling the Bishop of Exeter, a conspicuous opponent of the Bill, the pest of his diocese. But slight indeed was his imprudence compared with that of Lord John Manners, who declared that he would rather see Canada independent than allow her to disestablish her own Church.[1] The second reading of the Bill was carried by a majority of 83, and the third by a majority of 80. But the opposition to it was fiercely renewed in the House of Lords, where Lord Derby repeated the indiscretion of Lord John Manners. The Duke of Newcastle had charge of the Bill, which had really been prepared by the Whig Government, and was supported by Lord Grey. Bishop Philpotts of Exeter moved that it be read a second time that day six months, which would in its consequences have been equivalent to a renewal of the Stamp Act. From this direct method of warfare Lord Derby shrank. But he did not hesitate to say that he should prefer the dismemberment of the Empire to passing the Bill in its present shape. Accordingly in committee he moved an amendment limiting the operation of the measure to land not yet definitely set aside for ecclesiastical purposes, or, in other words, to about half the amount included in the previous Acts. Worse tactics it would be

1853.

Lord Derby's amendment.

[1] Hansard, 4th March 1853.

1853. difficult to imagine, and of course the Duke of Newcastle at once pointed out that the amendment would destroy the Bill. Fortunately Lord Aberdeen had a steady majority of Peers behind him, and the amendment was lost by 117 against 78. The debate was signalised by an amusing episode. The Bishop of Oxford, who was at that time much under the influence of Mr. Gladstone, supported the Bill, and was accused by Lord Derby of interrupting his speech by laughter. "I only smiled," said the Bishop, whereupon Lord Derby quoted the well-known line from Hamlet, "A man may smile and smile and be a villain." Lord Clarendon took up the cudgels for the Bishop, and there followed between the two lay statesmen one of those lively verbal duels which illustrate the constitutional anarchy of the Lords.[1] But it ended in good humour, and whatever may be thought of Lord Derby's taste, the felicity of the quotation is undeniable.[2] After this the Bill passed, and Canadian feeling was pacified. It is strange indeed that men in the position of Lord Derby and Sir John Pakington should have deliberately risked the almost certain consequences of a hostile vote.

Lord Derby and Bishop Wilberforce.

After the middle of February 1853, when Lord John Russell gave up the Foreign Office to Lord Clarendon, he led the House of Commons without holding any office or receiving any salary. The Queen objected to this arrangement as unconstitutional, and no previous example could be found. But on constitutional questions Lord John was always strong, and he argued with considerable force that as a Privy Councillor he was sufficiently qualified to communicate confidentially with the

Leadership without office.

[1] The Lord Chancellor and the Chairman of Committees have no more authority in the House of Lords than any other Peer.

[2] The late Lord Kimberley, who was present, told me that Lord Derby said "bishop," not "villain." But this cannot be reconciled with the report in Hansard.

Crown. It was no light thing for him voluntarily to surrender five thousand a year. Although his brother, the Duke of Bedford, was one of the richest men in England, he himself was one of the poorest in public life, and still he could assure Mr. Hume's Committee on Public Offices that he had never been in debt until he was Prime Minister. It was impossible in the circumstances to reproach him with the gratuitous discharge of arduous functions, which had never been discharged gratuitously before. At the same time it is a sound principle that all should be paid or none, and there was a good deal of common sense in the remonstrances of the Queen. Lord John, however, had his way, and got through the session with credit. Once more, for the fourth time, he carried the Jew Bill through the House of Commons. For the fourth time the House of Lords rejected it, following the lead of Lord Shaftesbury against Archbishop Whately and Bishop Thirlwall, although the Prime Minister pronounced himself a convert to the measure. Mr. Bright in the debate on the third reading urged the Government to make it a question of confidence, and to resign if the Lords threw out the Bill. But this Lord John wisely declined to do. For in the first place he would thereby have acknowledged the right of the Lords to determine the fate of a Government, and in the second place there was no popular feeling behind this righteous movement for justice to a few. There was nothing to do except to wait until the Peers found themselves in a better frame of mind.

1853.

The Jew Bill.

Sir Charles Wood's India Bill, introduced early in June, was more fortunate. At one time it was thought to threaten the existence of the Ministry. Yet the second reading was carried by a majority of 182. Radicals like Hume, Cobden, and Bright objected to it because it retained the jurisdiction of

The India Bill.

1853. the East India Company. But it gave greater authority to the Board of Control, and, what was far more important, by opening Haileybury it brought the principle of competition into the Civil Service of India. Macaulay, who rarely spoke after his re-election for Edinburgh, supported it with the weight of his experience, and contributed not a little to its success. But that was not the greatest triumph of the historian in the session of 1853. Lord Hotham's Bill for excluding the Master of the Rolls, like other judges, from the House of Commons was making placid progress towards the Statute Book. It had been read a second time without a division, and was considered to have practically passed, when on the 1st of June, by half an hour's ingenious sophistry, Macaulay persuaded the House to throw it out. He referred to the example of the Speaker, to the great Judges who sat in the House of Lords, to the able Recorders and Chairmen of Quarter Session who sat in the House of Commons. He was reduced to such argumentative straits that he had to plead for the eligibility of all the Chancery Judges, and at the same time to acquiesce in the exclusion of the Judges who administer common law, on the ground that they might be summoned to attend the House of Lords. His eloquence, however, prevailed, and the Master of the Rolls continued to occupy his anomalous position of privilege till 1875. The odious system of transporting criminals to the Colonies was abolished in 1853, except for those whose sentences were for fourteen years and upwards. This was a measure forced upon the Government by the Colonies themselves, and the Cabinet of Lord Derby had been quite prepared to take it up. West Australia was in fact the only part of the British Empire where a cargo of convicts was still welcome. There was no opposition except

Macaulay's vote-carrying speech.

The Anti-Transportation Bill.

from Lord Campbell on behalf of the Judges, Lord Brougham on behalf of society, and Lord Grey on his own. There is something almost touching in the fidelity with which Lord Grey clung to transportation. The alternative of penal servitude has solved most of the difficulties which the advocates of transportation predicted or foresaw. But it is doubtful whether long terms of imprisonment do not tend rather to brutalise than to reform. In 1853 the Constitution of Cape Colony, which, though granted in 1850, had been suspended on account of the Kaffir War, was promulgated, and Sir George Russell Clerk was sent out to recognise the independence of the Orange territory, or rather to insist upon it. The Dutch farmers of the Orange State were by no means anxious for this measure. But Sir George Clerk's instructions were peremptory, and he obtained the reluctant assent of the burghers to their own emancipation, which took effect on the 30th of January 1854. Thus the three successive Governments of Lord John Russell, Lord Derby, and Lord Aberdeen, had adopted the principle of compressing the Queen's sovereignty in South Africa within the narrowest possible limits. On the 20th of August, the day of the prorogation, the Royal Assent was given to the Charitable Trusts Bill and the Bill for restricting children's hours of labour in factories. This latter Bill, which Lord Palmerston had contrived to carry without division, amendment, or debate, simply provided that children should not work in factories before six in the morning or after six in the evening. It was a necessary complement to the Act of 1850, which applied to women and young persons, but not to children. Lord Palmerston suffered himself to be guided in these matters by Lord Shaftesbury, his wife's son-in-law. But he was himself what is

1853.

The Cape Constitution.

The Orange Free State.

The Children's Factory Bill.

1853. sometimes derisively called a humanitarian, and the best part of his character was his life-long hatred of oppression when not exercised by the Sultan of Turkey or the Emperor of the French.

The Charitable Trusts Bill. The Charitable Trusts Bill provided for the appointment of four Charity Commissioners, two of them barristers of twelve years' standing, to inquire into the management of charities in England and Wales. The Commissioners were empowered to frame new schemes and to vary the provisions of trust deeds when these were no lônger in accordance with the public interest. Few statutes have been more wisely framed or have proved of greater public utility.

Lord John Russell, always zealous in the cause of education, introduced on the 14th of April an elaborate measure, which for the first time recognised the principle of a municipal rate in aid of elementary teaching. But this Bill was quietly dropped, and nothing more was heard of it. The Parliamentary honours of the session belonged to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Gladstone's first Budget was introduced on the 18th of April in a speech five hours long, which could not well have been compressed. This wonderful statement fascinated the attention of the Committee when it was delivered, and has ranked ever since as a financial masterpiece. Mr. Gladstone was then forty-three years old. He had come very early into public life, and was a Cabinet Minister in his thirty-fourth year. At the Board of Trade he had been an invaluable assistant of Sir Robert Peel, and his conversion to free trade was no less complete than his master's. After Peel's death he transferred his allegiance to Lord Aberdeen, except in Italian politics. For he was an ardent sympathiser with the independence of Italy, whereas Lord Aberdeen stood by the Treaty of

Gladstone's first Budget.

Vienna. Otherwise he was not less opposed than the Prime Minister himself to the meddlesome diplomacy of Lord Palmerston. He still called himself a Conservative, and was anxious to cleanse the Conservative cause from the taint of Protection. But in finance he was a zealous reformer, as well he might be, for after six years of Sir Charles Wood the Treasury was an Augean stable. His grave and dignified eloquence, set off by the rich, deep tones of his flexible and melodious voice, had given him a high and influential position in the House of Commons. In the country, despite the unpopularity of his Anglo-Catholic doctrines, he was respected for his high character and moral earnestness. In helping to prepare the famous Budget of 1842, the precursor of free trade, he had learned all the technicalities of finance and commerce. His physical and mental vigour were alike marvellous. One of the ablest men who ever worked under him in the Civil Service declared that two hours with Gladstone tired him out. Thus admirably qualified for the task, Mr. Gladstone set himself to deal with the great problem of direct and indirect taxation. He was confronted at the outset with the question of the Income Tax, imposed in time of war by Mr. Pitt, and revived in time of peace by Sir Robert Peel. Renewed from year to year since 1842, it had now expired. Could it be dispensed with altogether? In his consideration of it Mr. Gladstone went back to its origin, and showed the enormous advantages which Pitt had derived from it in the war with France. He inferred that as an engine of taxation available in time of war it should be carefully preserved from any encroachments which would destroy its power, such as the exemption of incomes derived from any particular source, or the discrimination between one class of incomes and another. But it was a war tax, not a 1853.

1853. peace tax, and ought therefore to be gradually extinguished. It had hitherto stood at sevenpence in the pound. Mr. Gladstone now proposed that it should be continued at that rate for two years longer. From April 1855 to April 1857 it would be levied at the rate of sixpence in the pound. For the next three years it would be reduced to fivepence, and after April 1860 it would be entirely taken off. This prospective arrangement was of course subject to unforeseen contingencies, such as in fact occurred. It would have been well if the great financier had stopped there. But he went on to make two subordinate proposals, of which one was vexatious, and both were irritating. In 1853 the tax was not levied on incomes of a hundred and fifty pounds a year or less, which was a rough and ready, but effectual, scheme of exemption for the working classes. Mr. Gladstone proposed and carried the restriction of relief to incomes of not more than a hundred a year. It is true that he at once lowered the rate on these to fivepence in the pound, and that the tax has never as a fact been levied on working men. But the old limit, afterwards resumed, was a sound one, and to tamper with it did nothing but mischief. Furthermore, the Chancellor of the Exchequer brought Ireland within the scope of the tax. In doing so he displayed unquestionable courage. For the Irish vote was even then formidable, and even the Ministerial Whips did not know what the exact majority of the Government was. But though courageous, and what is sometimes called just in the abstract, this inclusion of Ireland was not wise. For it fostered that general feeling of discontent which separates Ireland, not without reason, from all other parts of the British Empire. Ireland received a sort of compensation. The debt incurred by her at the time of the famine

was wiped out, and the interest of this debt stood at nearly a quarter of a million. Needless to say, however, that that sum, which should have been forgiven in any case, has been paid many times over in the last century. 1853.

But the main feature of the Budget, by which it will always be remembered, was the Succession Duty. The landed interest in the House of Commons had been strong enough in the days of Pitt to exempt land and houses held by freehold tenure from the tax payable at death upon legacies of personal property. This unfair immunity Mr. Gladstone now abolished; he also made personalty passing by settlement liable to the tax, and fortunately Lord Aberdeen had strength enough in the House of Lords to carry the Bill. The Succession Duty fell short for some years of the two millions at which Mr. Gladstone estimated it. But it established an equitable principle, and removed a sense of injustice from the minds of the manufacturing classes. Some indirect taxes were also by this great Budget repealed. Of these the worst was the Soap Tax, a scandal to a civilised community. But, besides that, more than a hundred articles of food, including apples, were set free from duty. The tea duty, which pressed with great severity upon the poor, and almost deprived them of that incomparable beverage, was reduced by gradual stages to a shilling in the pound. On one point the hand of the Government was forced. Four days before the Budget was brought in Mr. Milner Gibson, the colleague of Mr. Bright in the representation of Manchester, had carried, with the help of the Tories, a motion for the repeal of the duty on advertisements in newspapers. Mr. Gladstone so far yielded as to propose that it should be reduced from eighteenpence to sixpence. But this did not satisfy Mr. Gibson and his friends, who again beat

The Succession Duty.

Repeal of the Advertisement Duty.

1853. the Government in Committee, and the sixpence followed the shilling. The immediate effect of this alleviation was greatly to increase the power of the *Times* and the wealth of its proprietors.

Otherwise the Budget passed substantially as it was brought in. Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, who did many things, and all of them well, led the opposition to the Income Tax in a speech eloquent as all his speeches were. But he was beaten by 71, and the Irish got very little support except from Sir Francis Baring. It is now known that before Mr. Gladstone produced his financial scheme to the House of Commons he had to convert his colleagues in the Cabinet, and that he addressed them on the subject for three hours. With the active and loyal assistance of Lord Aberdeen he succeeded in that preliminary effort. His subsequent labours in the House of Commons exhausted even a frame as strong as his, and at the close of his life he said that never again did he feel any work so burdensome. But it was not without result for himself as well as for the country. His financial reputation was henceforth without a rival. His speech, or spoken pamphlet, was pronounced superior to any of Peel's, and comparable only to the great economic treatise with which Pitt unfolded his Budget in 1798. Sir Stafford Northcote, in his *Twenty Years of Financial Policy*, gently remonstrates with his old chief for not perceiving in April 1853 that the peace of Europe was likely to be disturbed, and that England would be drawn into the quarrel. But even if this remote possibility, as it then seemed, had been a reasonable probability, there would have been nothing unsound in Mr. Gladstone's Budget. On the contrary, though it was a Budget of peace, it made provision for war. Admitting the truth of much that was said about the inquisitorial character of the Income

A Budget of peace with provision for war.

Tax, acknowledging the opportunities which it gave for fraud, and even illustrating them by a flagrant example which had come within his own experience, Mr. Gladstone nevertheless insisted with eloquence and with emphasis upon the necessity for retaining the tax. Why? Because it was an inestimable resource in time of war. A war Budget in 1853 would have been impossible, and even absurd. It would have led, among other things, to foreign complications, and would have fostered the very evil against which diplomacy had to guard. The objection which Sir Stafford Northcote takes was not taken at the time. The whole, or almost the whole, of his party divided against the continuance of the Income Tax, thus showing a far more robust faith in peace than the Chancellor of the Exchequer's. The Succession Duty was bitterly attacked, and the Bishops, strange as it may seem now, incurred extensive unpopularity in the Church by voting for it in the House of Lords. They were wiser than their critics, and no serious attempt was ever made to upset the Budget of 1853. Circumstances, not indeed beyond human control, but beyond the Chancellor of the Exchequer's, destroyed his arrangement for the reduction and extinction of the Income Tax. For those circumstances he provided, though he did not assume that they would arise. But the main principle of his Budget was that real and personal property should contribute their due proportion to the revenue when they changed hands by death. If above and beyond that he maintained a source from which the expenses of war could be defrayed, he is not liable to reproach because he dealt with the facts of the day rather than with the contingencies of the morrow. 1853.

It was Mr. Gladstone who procured the appointment this year of the first Civil Service Commission. Civil Service reform.

1853. The Commissioners were Sir Charles Trevelyan, of the Treasury, and Sir Stafford Northcote, then member for Stamford, the head of an old Devonshire family, afterwards Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons. The Commissioners reported in favour of open competition for the Civil Service at home, such as Parliament had enacted for India. But official opposition, Whig as well as Tory, was intensely bitter, and it was years before the recommendations of the Report were even partially carried out. As Sir George Trevelyan says, "It was one thing for them [our leading politicians] to deprive the East India directors of their patronage, and quite another to surrender their own." [1]

But though the honours of the session fell to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the services of the Home Secretary are only less worthy of commemoration than his. Lord Palmerston has been accused of neglecting the Home Office for the superior attractions of foreign affairs. The charge is altogether unjust. He was so active, quick, and zealous that he could watch every move in the diplomatic game without failing in any of the humbler duties which lay nearer at hand. He soon learnt the art of receiving deputations, which when he was at the Foreign Office he said that he did not understand, and in those days deputations to the Home Office included not merely Members of Parliament, but also Colonels of Militia. He looked into the administration of justice, and provided for the more frequent trials of prisoners by means of Winter Assizes. His amendment of the

Palmerston at the Home Office.

[1] *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, vol. ii. p. 383. Sir Charles Trevelyan and Sir Stafford Northcote are the respective originals of Sir Gregory Hardlines and Sir Warwick Westend in Anthony Trollope's amusing novel *The Three Clerks*.

Factory Acts for the benefit of children, already noticed, was not the only Bill he carried in 1853. At that time there were frequent epidemics of cholera, and Lord Palmerston took up in earnest the cause of sanitary reform. He enforced with impartial rigour the law of 1850 against intramural interments, and the closure of burial grounds which had become dangerous to health. He administered a wholesome dose of common sense to the Presbytery of Edinburgh when that body suggested a national fast on account of the cholera. "The Maker of the universe," he replied, "has established certain laws of nature for the planet in which we live, and the weal or woe of mankind depends upon the observance or neglect of those laws. One of those laws connects health with the absence of those gaseous exhalations which proceed from overcrowded human beings or from decomposing substances, whether animal or vegetable, and those same laws render sickness the almost inevitable consequence of exposure to those noxious influences. But it has at the same time pleased Providence to place it within the power of man to make such arrangements as will prevent or disperse such exhalations so as to render them harmless, and it is the duty of man to attend to those laws of nature, and to exert the faculties which Providence has thus given to man for his own welfare." He went on to urge with energy and gravity the obligation of purifying towns, especially those parts of them inhabited by the poorest classes. The "unco guid" on both sides of the Tweed attacked this letter as irreligious, and even profane. But Lord Shaftesbury, whose theological orthodoxy could not be impugned, had the discernment to perceive that, whatever might be Palmerston's personal beliefs, he was here expressing the views of all educated and practical Christians. It was

1853.

Palmerston on burials in churches.

His letter to the Presbytery of Edinburgh on cholera.

1853. Lord Palmerston who passed the first of the Acts compelling factories to burn their own smoke, and he was zealous in promoting the diversion of sewage from the Thames. It would have been difficult for a Home Secretary to do more if he had not known the relative positions of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.

CHAPTER XVII

THE EASTERN QUESTION

In 1853 there were three men who controlled the destinies of Europe. One was the Emperor Nicholas, the religious, ambitious head of a semi-civilised and yet thoroughly Christian State, who, in the minds even of sober statesmen, threatened to dominate the Continental system and become the arbiter of Europe. Another was the Emperor Napoleon, raised by violent means to a dizzy height, and looking about for a guarantee against imminent disaster. The third was Lord Palmerston, who, without neglecting the affairs of the Home Office, continued to exercise in the Cabinet a predominant influence upon foreign affairs. Palmerston hated Russia, and had forfeited his favourite post of Foreign Secretary by his impulsive patronage of Louis Napoleon. It was his object to combine with France against Russia, and when Palmerston had once taken up a question no earthly power would make him drop it. Thus the political atmosphere was dark and lowering, insomuch that it seemed as if the thirty-eight years' peace were coming to an end. 1853.

During Lord John Russell's brief tenure of the Foreign Office in 1853 it was his evil fate to become entangled in the tortuous negotiations which led to the Crimean War. The brilliant historian of that glorious and disastrous campaign The beginning of trouble in the East.

1853. has justly fixed responsibility for the breach of European peace upon the man of December. "There was repose," says Mr. Kinglake, "in the Empire of the Sultan, and even the rival Churches of Jerusalem were suffering each other to rest, when the French President, in cold blood, and under no new motive for action, took up the forgotten cause of the Latin Church of Jerusalem and began to apply it as a wedge for sundering the peace of the world."[1] Men do not, as a rule, act without motives, and Louis Napoleon's motive was obvious enough. He was under a heavy obligation to the Church of France, which had welcomed him and his accomplices with public thanksgivings in the Church of Our Lady, the Mother of Christ. The neighbouring Morgue had been a fitter place. As a token of his gratitude he pressed upon the Sultan the claims of Roman Catholicism to the guardianship of the Holy Places at Jerusalem. The position of the Sultan, if not the Sultan himself, deserved some pity. For he was, in our English vernacular, between the devil and the deep sea. If he decided one way he would offend France. If he decided the other way he would offend Russia, and Russia meant the Emperor Nicholas. The Sultan, Abdul Medjid, though nominally an absolute sovereign, was really a puppet in the hands of others. Enervated by premature debauchery and addicted to drink, he counted for nothing, or next to nothing, in the conduct of affairs. The Emperor of Russia, on the other hand, though he had a very able Chancellor in Count Nesselrode, was not only the Head of the State, but the State itself. He had been nearly thirty years on the throne, and was an autocrat of the most uncompromising type. Although his

Louis Napoleon's interference.

Position of the Sultan.

[1] Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea down to the Death of Lord Raglan*, vol. i. p. 441. First Edition.

personal character was not stainless, the simplicity of his domestic life increased the veneration of the Russian peasants for the object of their religious faith as well as their political allegiance. Fanatically orthodox and conservative, an enemy of all reform, ecclesiastical or secular, his power had been quite unshaken by the revolutions of 1848. There is no reason for doubting that within his judgment, which was narrow, and by his lights, which were dim, he sincerely desired the good of Russia and her Church. It was not to be expected that he would tolerate the interference of the French Republic in Turkey, where the rights of his co-religionists were concerned. The responsibility of Louis Napoleon, which in subsequent stages of the dispute seemed to be quite forgotten, was clearly and unmistakably declared by Lord John Russell while Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. "The Ambassador of France," he said, "was the first to disturb the *status quo* in which the matter rested. Not that the disputes of the Latin and Greek Churches were not very active, but that without some political action on the part of France those quarrels would never have troubled the relations of friendly Powers. If report is to be believed, the French Ambassador was the first to speak of having recourse to force, and to threaten the intervention of a French fleet to enforce the demands of his country." And then Lord John proceeded to the use of language which a man of his religious nature cannot have employed lightly, and which must have given him strange sensations if he ever recalled it in after years. "We should deeply regret," he wrote in the name of the Cabinet, "any dispute that might lead to conflict between two of the great Powers of Europe, but when we reflect that the quarrel is for exclusive privileges in a spot near which the heavenly host proclaimed peace on earth

1853.

Character of the Emperor Nicholas.

Lord John puts the saddle on the right horse.

1853. and goodwill towards men, when we see rival Churches contending for mastery in the very place where Christ died for mankind, the thought of such a spectacle is melancholy indeed." [1]

The original dispute. The actual subject of dispute cannot be better defined than Kinglake has defined it.[2] "Stated in bare terms, the question was whether, for the purpose of passing through the building into their Grotto, the Latin monks should have the key of the chief door of the Church of Bethlehem, and also one of the keys of each of the two doors of the sacred Manger, and whether they should be at liberty to place in the sanctuary of the Nativity a silver star adorned with the arms of France." This question had been discussed before December 1851. But not until the President had made himself absolute ruler of France did it become acute, for M. de Lavalette, the French Ambassador, then, for the first time, received instructions to press the matter with energy, and because he was not energetic enough he was afterwards superceded by General Baraguay d'Hilliers. The Porte temporised as long as possible. But at the close of 1852, just as Lord Aberdeen's Government was coming into office, the pressure of France prevailed, the star was placed in the sanctuary, and the key was given to the Latins. Count Nesselrode strenuously protested against these "violent proceedings," and two corps of the Russian army were despatched to the frontier of the Danubian Principalities. These Principalities, Moldavia and Wallachia, were at that time under the suzerainty of the Porte. But Russia had a joint right with Turkey to occupy them in case of disturbance. There was not, of course, and there could not be, any secret about the advance of the Russian troops. The situation

Temporising policy of the Porte.

[1] Lord John Russell to Lord Cowley, 28th Jan. 1853.
[2] *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol i. p. 46.

was plainly critical. It looked as if Turkey must be involved in war with Russia, and as if France might come to Turkey's assistance. In these circumstances the Emperor of Russia endeavoured to arrive at a friendly understanding with England. The good faith of his overtures was afterwards doubted, and a belief in it came to be considered unpatriotic. But for this scepticism there is no adequate ground. The Emperor spoke with every appearance of frankness to Sir Hamilton Seymour, the British Ambassador at Petersburg, on the 14th of January 1853. After dwelling upon the necessity for harmonious relations between the two Governments, he added, "When we are agreed I am quite without anxiety as to the rest of Europe; it is immaterial what the others may think or do." This was common sense. The English navy and the Russian army could have settled the Eastern question between them. It should have been the first duty of an English Minister to frame a joint policy with Russia. To avoid all complicity in the schemes of Louis Napoleon should have been his second. The Czar further told Sir Hamilton that the "sick man," as he had long before called Turkey, was dying, and that the arrangements for disposing of his property should at once be made. He recurred to this subject about a fortnight later, and referred with great frankness to claims far larger than the control of images and shrines. "In the Turkish Empire," he said, "there are several millions of Christians [about twelve] whose interests I am called upon to watch over, while the right of doing so is secured to me by Treaty." The reference was to the Treaty of 1774, the Treaty of Kainardji, and the right which the Czar claimed was then in dispute. It is true that the treaty only contained a promise on behalf of the Porte. But Mr. Gladstone afterwards argued, with con-

1853.

The Czar's overtures to England.

His conversations with Sir Hamilton Seymour.

1853. siderable force, that a promise in a treaty is a specific engagement, which the party making it may be required to fulfil. On the 21st of February the Czar went further, much further, than he had gone before. Repeating that the dissolution of the Turkish Empire was imminent, he proceeded as follows: "The Principalities are, in fact, an independent State under my protection. This might so continue. Servia might receive the same form of Government. So again with Bulgaria; there seems to be no reason why this province should not form an independent State. As to Egypt, I can quite understand the importance to England of that territory. I can then only say, that if in the event of a distribution of the Ottoman succession upon the fall of the Empire, you should take possession of Egypt, I shall have no objection to offer. I would say the same thing of Candia.[1] That island might suit you, and I do not know why it should not become an English possession." Sir Hamilton Seymour replied, in terms which have a strange look now, that England had no interest in Egypt beyond securing the means of communication with India.

The frankness of Nicholas.

It cannot be said that the Czar in this conversation was otherwise than perfectly straightforward. Blunt he may have been, to the verge of cynicism. Deceitful he certainly was not. Nor is there any reason to doubt that the Ottoman Empire in Europe would soon have broken up, unless it had been artificially supported from without. When Sir Hamilton Seymour's despatches, containing the Czar's proposals, were laid before Parliament a year afterwards, there was a storm of indignation against the alleged perfidy of Russia. But by that time the feeling of the British public had been so exasperated by articles in

[1] Crete.

the Press that mere argument was useless, and only invective was in demand. To the Prime Minister there was nothing strange in what the Czar said. He had heard it all, or most of it, when he was Foreign Secretary in 1844. So had Sir Robert Peel. Count Nesselrode's Memorandum, which was laid before Parliament in 1854, embodied the results of what passed between the Emperor Nicholas and the British Government when His Majesty visited England ten years before. Both parties then distinctly recognised that the future of Turkey was a question for Great Britain and Russia to decide. They agreed that the dissolution of Turkey might occur at any time, and that, if it did, they should act in common. To Lord Aberdeen, therefore, the Czar's language must have seemed perfectly reasonable and natural.[1] 1853.

Before Lord John left the Foreign Office, he took a momentous step. He sent Lord Stratford de Redcliffe back to Constantinople. This was not a new appointment. But Lord Stratford had been absent from his post for nearly two years, and a further extension of his leave would have been favourable to the peace of the world. He received his first instructions after his return from Lord Clarendon. But it was Lord John who wrote to Sir Hamilton Seymour on the 9th of February upon the subject of Sir Hamilton's first two conversations with the Czar. He testified neither anger nor astonishment. The Emperor Nicholas

Lord John's reception of the overture.

[1] Lord Malmesbury's assertion (*Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, vol. i. p. 402) that the Emperor Nicholas, Sir Robert Peel, the Duke of Wellington, and Lord Aberdeen, drew up and signed in 1844 a secret Memorandum recognising the Russian Protectorate of Greek Christians in Turkey has been authoritatively contradicted by Lord Stanmore, is opposed to all the evidence, and cannot be true. Lord Malmesbury's book, however amusing as a commentary, is most dangerous as a guide. Though in the form of a diary, it is not really a diary at all. Many of the entries must have been made long after the dates assigned to them, and sometimes the same event is assigned to more dates than one.

1853. had disclaimed all idea of adding Constantinople to his dominions, though he guarded himself by the somewhat ambiguous remark that he might have to occupy it for a time. This was the only phrase of His Majesty's which could excite any suspicion, and it did not excite Lord John's. He simply said that the Queen's Government had no designs upon Constantinople, and would not act without the cognisance of Russia, whose protection of the Greek Christians was, he added in words not soon forgotten, "prescribed by duty, and sanctioned by treaty."[1] But he deprecated any secret arrangement between England and Russia without the sanction of the other Powers. This was an indirect refusal of the Czar's overtures, and was regarded by him as a rebuff, which he neither forgot nor forgave. It was in strict accordance with diplomatic propriety. It did nothing to preserve the peace of Europe.

The three enemies of Nicholas.

The three statesmen who most detested the Czar Nicholas were the French Emperor, Lord Palmerston, and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. Lord Palmerston deeply resented the Russian protest against his treatment of Greece. The Emperor had refused to receive Lord Stratford, then Sir Stratford Canning, as Ambassador at St. Petersburg. He had declined to address the French Emperor as *Mon frère*, though all the other Sovereigns in Europe had done so. Louis Napoleon felt this slight with peculiar bitterness, because he had failed to ally himself in marriage with any Royal house. Eugénie de Montijo, whom he married on the 29th of January 1853, was a lady of remarkable beauty, and singular personal charm. But she was not born in the purple, and in announcing his engagement with her to the French nation, the Emperor made the mistake of alluding

Marriage of the French Emperor.

[1] Lord John Russell to Sir Hamilton Seymour, 9th Feb. 1853.

to his own *position de parvenu*. After his honeymoon he proceeded to business. On the 8th of March, more than a month before Lord Stratford's arrival, Colonel Rose, afterwards Lord Strathnairn, then in charge of the Embassy, applied to Vice-Admiral Dundas, the British officer commanding in the Mediterranean, and asked him to make a naval demonstration in Besika Bay for the protection of Constantinople. The Admiral very properly refused to do anything of the kind without positive instructions from home. Then the French Emperor saw his chance. He wanted war, and he wanted to drag England into war after him. Pretending to believe, as Colonel Rose did believe, that Russia was about to attack Constantinople, he ordered to Smyrna the French fleet at Toulon. This was intended as a menace, and was a decisive step in the direction of war. Even if Constantinople had been threatened, these French ships would have been useless, for, as Sir Baldwin Walker, the senior Sea Lord, informed the Cabinet, a Russian force could easily land at a point near the entrance to the Bosphorus, within twenty miles of the Turkish capital. 1853.

Despatch of the French fleet to Smyrna.

Lord Stratford arrived in Constantinople on the 5th April, a month after the Czar's emissary, Prince Mentschikoff. He had been the diplomatic representative of England there during the Russian campaign of the first Napoleon. He had become in one sense more Turkish than the Turks, for he considered that he had the exclusive right to advise the Sultan. The Sultan's Ministers were Lord Stratford's tools. Whenever the name or title of the Sultan is used in describing the negotiations held between Russia and Turkey at Constantinople, it must be understood that Lord Stratford de Redcliffe is meant. Lord Clarendon's instructions to the Ambassador

Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.

1853.

did not mention Russia; but in a strain of grave and dignified warning he pointed out the "position of peculiar danger" to which the Ottoman Empire had been brought by gross and continuous misgovernment. "Nor," wrote the new Foreign Secretary, "will you disguise from the Sultan and his Ministers that perseverance in his present course must end in alienating the sympathies of the British nation, and making it impossible for Her Majesty's Government to shelter them from the impending danger, or to overlook the exigencies of Christendom, exposed to the natural consequences of their unwise policy, and reckless administration."[1] Lord Stratford took no more notice of this despatch than if it had been a leading article in an Opposition newspaper. From the moment of his arrival he set himself to checkmate the Russian. This he had little difficulty in doing. There was a Russian statesman, Prince Orloff, who could have met Lord Stratford on more nearly equal terms; but he was too pacific for the Czar, who was bent on enforcing the submission of Turkey. Prince Mentschikoff was one of the worst diplomatists, as he afterwards proved to be one of the worst generals, that Russia ever produced. He thought that he could do everything by swagger, and by frightening the Turk. He forgot that the Turk would not be left alone. Lord Stratford knew all about Turkish misgovernment, and in writing home he denounced it amply. But he would not allow any foreigner to say a word against the Porte.

Lord Clarendon's first despatch.

Lord Stratford's reception of it.

Prince Mentschikoff.

Within three weeks of his return to his post, Lord Stratford had settled with great diplomatic skill the question of the Holy Places.[2] In the

The question of the Holy Places settled.

[1] Lord Clarendon to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, 26th Feb. 1853.

[2] "According to the terms of the arrangement thus effected, the key of the Church of Bethlehem and the silver star placed in the grottos of the Nativity were to remain where they were, but were to confer no new right on the Latins, and the door-keeper of the Church was to

hands of this wily veteran Prince Mentschikoff was like an angry child. Lord Stratford soothed him, and the subject of the shrines disappeared from public view for ever. But the action of the French Emperor had caused, as it was meant to cause, impatience and anger at Petersburg. Prince Mentschikoff was ordered to insist that the Porte should give a guarantee confirming all the privileges of the Greek Church in Turkey. In this there was nothing unreasonable, and certainly nothing to surprise those who, like the Queen's Ministers, had been told of the Czar's conversations with Sir Hamilton Seymour. The Emperor of Russia would have preferred to arrange for this Protectorate in concert with England. He had been rebuffed, and he now demanded it alone. If left to himself, the Sultan would probably have conceded the demand, and an enormous amount of human misery would have been avoided. He was left to the British Ambassador, and he refused it. On the 21st of May Prince Mentschikoff quitted Constantinople with his staff. The ground on which the proposed treaty was rejected is one of the most curious fictions in the history of Europe. It was called the Independence of the Ottoman Empire. No such thing as independence of the Ottoman Empire existed in fact. Lord Stratford himself was in the habit of addressing the Court to which he was accredited in a style which would have ensured his dismissal from any other European capital within twenty-four hours. Not one of the five great Powers would allow its subjects to live under the jurisdiction of Turkish tribunals, and even subjects of the Sultan obtained from the foreign Embassies documents which shielded them

1853.

Mentschikoff's further demands.

The Sultan's refusal.

Mentschikoff's departure.

The "Independence of the Ottoman Empire."

be a Greek priest as before, but was to have no right to obstruct other nations in their right to enter the building." — Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. i. p. 138.

1853. from the tender mercies of the Sultan's judges. When this figment of Turkish independence had been constituted, it was further developed into a British interest. Why it was a British interest nobody took the trouble to explain. That was an axiom, not a mere proposition, and therefore required no proof. The familiar doctrine known as the balance of power was more intelligible. For it could at least be argued that if Russia acquired a right to protect the Christian subjects of the Porte (supposing her not to have such a right already), her preponderance in the east of Europe would be excessive. But those who thus reasoned might have remembered that Russia had put down an insurrection in a part of the Austrian Empire called Hungary without any right at all.

The balance of power.

The departure of Prince Mentschikoff from Constantinople, baffled and defeated by the British Ambassador, brought Europe within sight of war. Public feeling in Great Britain ran strongly in favour of Turkey, and against Russia. Most Englishmen exaggerated both the strength of Russia and the weakness of Turkey. They saw a great Power bullying a small one, and their sympathies went where the natural sympathies of Englishmen always go. The events of 1848 and 1849 were fresh in their minds. The Czar had interfered where he had no business, and he had interfered on the wrong side. He had put down the Hungarians, who would otherwise have obtained their independence from Austria. He had joined the Emperor Francis Joseph in calling upon the Sultan to give up the Hungarian refugees. The Sultan, backed by England and France, had declined. The chief of these patriots, Kossuth, had become a popular hero in England, especially with Radicals, from whom resistance to

Public feeling in England.

needless war might have been most confidently expected. 1853.

For the present the question was within the control of the Cabinet. The English people had not yet got out of hand. Unfortunately, however, the Cabinet were divided, and that not, as all Cabinets must be, on matters of detail, but on matters of principle. The Prime Minister was extremely pacific, but strong forces were already working against him, especially Lord Palmerston, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, and above all, the Emperor of the French. It is a great mistake to represent Lord Aberdeen as a weak man. He was as firm and courageous as he was high-minded and just. He never for a moment faltered in his desire to preserve peace, or in his belief that it might be honourably preserved. He admitted indeed that Russia could not be suffered to establish herself at Constantinople, but he scouted as an utter delusion the idea that she cherished that design. He would have defied Lord Palmerston, Lord Stratford, and the Emperor of the French. For though a warm friend of France, and the author of the good understanding with Louis Philippe, he thoroughly disliked and distrusted Louis Napoleon. But he had made up his mind, first that Lord John Russell was indispensable to the Government, and secondly that to break up the Government would precipitate war. If Lord John had stood by his chief, instead of trying to supplant him, peace might have been maintained. The Cabinet was not divided, as was commonly supposed at the time, between Whigs and Peelites. The war party at first consisted of Lord Palmerston, Lord Lansdowne, and the Duke of Newcastle, who were afterwards joined by Lord John Russell, Lord Clarendon, and Sir James Graham. Even Mr. Gladstone went with

Divisions in the Cabinet.

Lord Aberdeen and Lord John.

1853. the stream. But Lord Granville wrote to the Premier in the summer of 1853, "Remember that the silent members of the Cabinet are all with you." Sir William Molesworth was the only Radical who, as a Cabinet Minister, had a voice in deciding the policy of the country, and, until war actually broke out, he was the staunchest of the Aberdonians. Two other Radicals were in the Government, but not in the Cabinet, and were therefore bound either to support the decisions of the inner body or to resign. These were Mr. Charles Villiers, Judge Advocate-General, and Mr. Bernal Osborne, Secretary of the Admiralty. Mr. Cobden, Mr. Bright, and Mr. Milner Gibson were and remained staunch advocates of peace. They had against them the whole of the unofficial Whigs except Lord Grey, and all the Tories save a few eccentric individuals, such as Lord Granby, Lord Claud Hamilton, and Mr. John Wilson Croker, of the *Quarterly Review*, who had permanently withdrawn from Parliament as a protest against the Reform Act. The last three had no influence upon public affairs, and Lord Grey, with all his ability, was coming to be regarded as a "crank." Bright and Cobden would have produced more effect if they had argued against the diplomacy of the Government, instead of merely deprecating bloodshed. Bright belonged to the Society of Friends, whose opposition to war was an article of their religion. Cobden was a member of the Church of England. But capacious as his mind was, and enlightened as were his general views, he let it be supposed that in his opinion the one object of foreign policy was the advancement of trade.

The peace party.

Lord Clarendon's patronage of the Porte.

Lord Clarendon does not seem to have appreciated, as Lord Stratford certainly did, the full significance of the responsibility assumed by England in advising the Porte to reject the

ultimatum of Prince Mentschikoff. But before the end of May he wrote two despatches of momentous importance. To Sir Hamilton Seymour he expressed entire approval of what the Turkish Government had nominally and ostensibly done. To Lord Stratford, who had really done it, he wrote that it was "indispensable to take measures for the protection of the Sultan, and to aid his Highness in repelling any attack that might be made upon his territory." [1] No treaty put England under any such obligation. No statesman told Parliament, though Parliament was sitting, why it behoved this country to take the side of the Sultan against the Czar. 1853.

At this point of the controversy the Czar came to a fatal determination. He resolved to enforce the compliance of Turkey with his not unreasonable demands by occupying the Danubian Principalities. He had far better have fallen back upon the Treaty of Kainardji, and upon the notorious oppression of the Sultan's Christian subjects. But Nicholas was angry, and anger is a bad counsellor. Before the occupation could be carried out, though after it had been arranged, Admiral Dundas was ordered to sail from Malta into Besika Bay to join the French fleet at the entrance of the Dardanelles, and to put himself under the orders of Lord Stratford. No foreign ships of war could pass into the Sea of Marmora and the Black Sea in time of peace, though when Turkey was at war they might enter with the leave of the Sultan. The movement of the fleets was made at the instigation of the French Emperor, and contrary to the judgment of Lord Aberdeen, who regarded it as a "poor demonstration, which only insults him [the Czar], and does nothing effectual either for us or for the Power we desire to

The occupation of the Principalities by Russia.

The Mediterranean fleet put at Lord Stratford's disposal.

[1] Clarendon to Stratford, 26th May 1853.

1853. protect."[1] He yielded, however, to his more bellicose colleagues, who did not see that they were being pulled by Parisian strings. One of them, indeed, required no pulling. Lord Palmerston used to vent his sarcasm, which was not of a very high order, upon "peace-at-any-price men." War at any price was his object in 1853. He did not, as has been seen, neglect the business of the Home Office; but never were the interests of a Home Secretary less exclusively at home. He captured Lord John Russell. He stimulated Lord Clarendon. He was hand in glove with Count Walewski, the French Ambassador. He was actively engaged in the cause of Turkey while Lord Stratford protested to the Porte against the oppression of the Christians, and Lord Clarendon wrote that Christians in Turkey must be put on a level with Mahomedans. Lord Clarendon might as well have proposed the abrogation of the Koran.

Palmerston's activity.

On the 2nd of July the Russians crossed the river Pruth, and occupied the Danubian Principalities. This, though an arbitrary act, was not an act of war. The Emperor Nicholas had told the Sultan, at least Count Nesselrode had told Reschid Pacha, that failing compliance with Prince Mentschikoff's Ultimatum, Moldavia and Wallachia would be occupied as a material guarantee. Though under the Sultan's suzerainty, the Principalities were subject to a joint protectorate, and could not be regarded as an integral portion of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the occupation gave Turkey a case for war, if she chose to avail herself of it. Count Nesselrode, in a diplomatic circular, alleged that the Pruth had been crossed as a practical reply to the demonstrations of the English and French fleets in Besika Bay. But this allegation does not square with the dates.

May 31.

The "material guarantee."

[1] Lord Stanmore's *Life of Lord Aberdeen*, p. 223.

For the threat of occupation was issued on the 31st of May, and the order to Admiral Dundas was not sent till the 2nd of June. Lord Palmerston at this time urged that the fleets of the Western Powers should pass the Dardanelles and anchor in the Bosphorus to protect Constantinople. To this Lord Aberdeen demurred, and Palmerston gave way. The Cabinet were unanimous in holding that Turkey should be advised not to declare war against Russia, and that the dispute should be settled by the four neutral Powers in conjunction. Here we may pause to observe that at least one of Lord Aberdeen's colleagues, Mr. Gladstone, always repudiated the "integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire" as a motive or justification for war. He held that Russia was defying Europe, and that it was the duty of Europe to uphold public law against aggressive violence. But Mr. Gladstone's theory implies either the unanimity of the Powers, or at least a predominant majority, and neither Austria nor Prussia would go the length of using physical force. Instead of further naval demonstrations, which would have been contrary to treaty, the Cabinet drew up a form of Convention to be signed by Russia and Turkey for the settlement of their differences. The French Government at first accepted it. But the Emperor did not want peace, and especially disliked a peace proceeding from England. He drew up a paper which he proposed that the Porte should address to Russia, and upon this draft the representatives of the four Powers at the Austrian capital framed the Vienna Note. The purport of the Note was to confirm the members of the Greek Church who were subjects of the Sultan in the enjoyment of their ancient rights and privileges, and the Czar, with suspicious alacrity, at once accepted it.

1853.

Turkey advised not to declare war.

The Vienna Note.

Its acceptance by the Czar.

1853. All reasonable causes of conflict seemed now to have been removed, and the collective will of Europe to have prevailed. Lord Aberdeen hoped that peace had been secured, that Russia would forthwith evacuate the Principalities, and that he might then retire in favour of Lord John Russell, as Lord John was impatient for him to do. Lord Aberdeen's principal colleagues, however, Whig as well as Peelite, refused to contemplate the change, and even if they had been favourable to it, the development of affairs in the East would have made it impossible. For "the Sultan" rejected the Vienna Note, because it implied that his subjects could have rights independent of their sovereign. Unless they had, they would possess no rights at all. The moment was extremely critical, and Lord Aberdeen was not the man to give up a position of trust when it became also a position of peril. The four Powers endeavoured to overcome the resistance of Turkey. But they were not sufficiently explicit.[1] Instead of peremptorily calling upon her to follow the example of the Czar, and accept their own Note, on pain of being left to her own resources, they said that they were ready to make another attempt at Petersburg. For as the Turkish modifications appeared to them unobjectionable though unnecessary, the Emperor of Russia might, they thought, be willing to admit them. Meanwhile Mr. Layard, a fanatical partisan of Turkey, raised a debate in the House of Commons on the policy of the Government, which ought to have been raised long before by the friends of peace. He was supported by Lord Dudley Stuart, one

Lord Aberdeen's willingness to resign in favour of Lord John.

Rejection of the Vienna Note.

Aug. 16.

[1] Lord Stratford was instructed to press the Vienna Note upon the acceptance of the Porte, and doubtless he went through that form. He "recommended it officially," as his biographer says (Lane-Poole's *Life of Stratford Canning*, vol. ii. p. 291). But the Turkish Ministers knew, no one better, the difference between an official and a personal recommendation from the Ambassador.

of Palmerston's Radical admirers, and opposed by Mr. Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton, "freedom's staunch and genial friend." But the most interesting part of the discussion was the duel between Mr. Cobden and Lord Palmerston. There was nothing very remarkable in what Cobden said upon that occasion. He pointed out, as any sensible man might have done, that the Turks were intruders in Europe, that their home was in Asia, and that the sympathies of Englishmen should be not with the Sultan, but with his Christian subjects. The really extraordinary speech was Lord Palmerston's reply. In spite of Lord Stratford's damning reports, which he must have seen, he maintained that the state of Turkey was one of progressive improvement, and he edified the men of business in the House by a lecture on the value of Turkish trade. The audacity of his assertions must have appalled his colleagues. Time has abundantly vindicated the plain sense of the simple manufacturer against the gasconade of the veteran diplomatist. But the Opposition were beginning to cry out for war, and Lord Malmesbury had extracted from Lord Clarendon in the House of Lords a declaration that the Government would insist upon the retirement of Russia from the Principalities, though if any other country than Turkey were interested in Moldavia and Wallachia, it was Austria, and not England. When Parliament was prorogued, the Queen's Speech expressed a hope that a peaceful settlement of the differences between Russia and Turkey might be secured. But that hope was dwindling. Early in the month of September the Czar, as might have been expected, refused to accept the Turkish modifications in the Vienna Note. He had, with rather surprising meekness, allowed the four Powers to arbitrate between him and "the Sultan." Further he refused to go. When Turkey raised difficulties,

1853.

Palmerston and Cobden.

The Opposition warlike.

Aug. 20.

The Czar's refusal of the Turkish changes in the Vienna Note.

1853. he left England, France, Austria, and Prussia to remove them. Count Nesselrode's refusal, addressed to Baron Meyendorf, the Russian Ambassador at Vienna, was moderate and courteous in its terms. He pointed out that the Note represented the collective opinion of the four Powers, that the Emperor had acquiesced in their view, and that Turkey was now arrayed against Europe. Even Lord Palmerston agreed with Lord Aberdeen in thinking that the Porte must be required to accept the Vienna Note. But at this point Lord John Russell interposed. Although he had been foremost in urging that the Porte should be compelled to accept the Note, he now wrote to Lord Aberdeen that to press it upon the Porte unmodified was shameful, and even added a hope that the Porte would reject it. If it were forced upon her, he would retire from the Government. This from the man who a few weeks before had agreed that the modifications should be left for the Czar to take or to leave because they were absolutely unimportant. Henceforth Lord John acted with the war party in the Cabinet, and unhappily Count Nesselrode played into their hands by sending a confidential Memorandum to the Russian Minister at Berlin, in which he compared the modifications with the original draft in order to show that the draft did confer upon Russia the Protectorate over Greek Christians of which "the Sultan" complained. This Memorandum was by some accident published, and injured the prospects of peace. Yet such an interpretation would have been placed by Russia upon any similar undertaking given by the Porte, inasmuch as it only represented the meaning attached by all Russian statesmen to the Treaty of Kainardji.

Proposal to coerce the Porte.

Threatened resignation of Lord John.

The Russian interpretation of the Note.

"The Sultan" was now bent on declaring war. But Lord Aberdeen made another effort to preserve peace. A fresh Note was presented to "the Sultan,"

free from the disputed passages, and "the Sultan" was even allowed to draw it up himself. Lord Clarendon, in an able despatch to Sir Hamilton Seymour, defended the modifications suggested by "the Sultan" in the other Note, because, he said, that Monarch could not be asked to bestow upon his own subjects what he had granted in the case of foreigners. Lord Clarendon ignored both the fact that the privilege of immunity from Turkish justice had been extorted from the Sultan on behalf of many Turkish subjects, and also the certainty that no Turkish promise without a guarantee was worth a straw. With the new Note Lord Aberdeen most wisely proposed to send a statement that if it were not adopted, the four Powers would not "permit themselves, in consequence of unfounded objections, or by the declaration of war, which they have already condemned, to be drawn into a policy inconsistent with the peace of Europe, as well as with the true interests of Turkey itself."[1] Had these words been added, there would in all probability have been no war. But Lord Palmerston and Lord John, both now intensely warlike, resisted them with such energy that Lord Aberdeen dropped them. He tried, however, once more. Knowing that "the Sultan" meant to declare war, he proposed that the Turks should be required to abstain from active hostilities during the progress of negotiations. Lord John added the words "for a reasonable time," and "the Sultan" construed them to mean a fortnight. The consequence was that before the Note had been accepted, "the Sultan" declared war, and that diplomatic document became a piece of waste paper, as "the Sultan," though he drew it up, had all along intended that it should. On the 18th of October a Divan consisting of a hundred and seventy-two persons assembled for the formal purpose of de-

1853.

A new Note.

Lord Aberdeen's proposed warning to Turkey.

Rejected by Palmerston and Russell.

Declaration of war by Turkey against Russia.

[1] Lord Stanmore's *Life of Lord Aberdeen*, p. 232.

1853. claring war against Russia. The Russian General was summoned to withdraw from the Principalities before the expiration of fifteen days. He did not comply with the demand, and the two hereditary enemies were again at war.

Lord Aberdeen had done his best, short of upsetting the Government, to prevent war from breaking out. He now did his best to prevent it from spreading. But as he had formerly yielded, for the sake of unity, to the remonstrances of Lord Palmerston and Lord John, so he now allowed himself to be what is vulgarly called "bluffed" by the Emperor of the French. That crafty Potentate, watching English opinion, and perceiving that it grew more warlike, thought that he could safely drag the British Cabinet one step nearer the goal of his desires. Under pretence that there might be a rising of theological students in Constantinople, he asked, or rather he insisted, that the French and English fleets should pass the Dardanelles. This was a step strictly forbidden by the Treaty of 1841. But the British Ministers yielded to their French Master, and after some delay the fleets entered the Dardanelles on the 22nd of October, being just twenty-four hours sooner than Abdul Medjid could lawfully have given them leave. The protection of Constantinople, which is neither an English nor a French town, was the ostensible object of this manœuvre. It was of course intended by Louis Napoleon, and understood by Nicholas, as a menacing demonstration against Russia. Kinglake, with unusual simplicity, contrasts the cautious Proclamation of "the Sultan" and the more fervid appeal to religious sentiment put forward by the Czar. Even if we assume that Abdul Medjid, and not "the great Eltchi" who governed in his name, was for these purposes the Sultan, it may still be observed that a Sovereign who depended upon the

The French and English fleets sent through the Dardanelles.

support of at least two Christian Powers would not unnaturally abstain from anathematising the Christian faith. But indeed a Turkish Pasha, be he Sultan, Grand Vizier, Foreign Minister, or what not, cared a great deal more for suppressing other people's religion than for upholding his own. The Prime Minister, who kept his head while other people were rapidly losing theirs, wrote to Lord Palmerston on the 6th of November, in language which subsequent events have ratified and enforced. "Notwithstanding the favourable opinion entertained by many," he said, "I have no belief whatever in the improvement of the Turks. It is true that under the pressure of the moment benevolent decrees may be issued, but which [*sic*], except under the eye of some Foreign Minister, are entirely neglected. Their whole system is radically vicious and abominable. I do not refer to fables which may be invented at St. Petersburg or Vienna, but to numerous despatches of Lord Stratford himself, and our own Consuls, who describe a frightful picture of lawless oppression and cruelty. This is so true that if war should continue, and the Turkish armies meet with disaster, we may expect to see the Christian population of the Empire rise against their oppressors, and in such a case it could hardly be proposed to employ the British force in the Levant to assist in compelling their return under a Mahommedan yoke." Lord Aberdeen saw further than most of his contemporaries, and he did not commit the error of supposing that Turkey could be reformed. But he undoubtedly misunderstood the trend of public opinion in the autumn of 1853, which Lord Palmerston perfectly appreciated. The Turkish armies did not "meet with disaster," and the disaster which befell the Turkish Navy had a very different effect from that which Lord Aberdeen anticipated. Early in November the Turks crossed the Danube

1853.

Lord Aberdeen's distrust of Turkey.

1853. under Omar Pacha, and gained several successes over the Russian troops. But while Russians and Turks were fighting, while the four Powers were negotiating, the disease known as war fever was taking possession of England. Whatever else may be said of it, it was a wholly disinterested passion. Englishmen had nothing to gain by war, and nothing to lose by peace. It was for no selfish object, but from a genuine feeling of moral indignation against Russian policy as described by most of the English newspapers, though not at first by the most powerful of them all, that the British public clamoured for strong measures. Yet clamour they did. As Lord Stanmore says,[1] "Whigs and Tories and Radicals, men and women, young and old, orators on the platform and preachers in the pulpit, vied with one another in denunciations of the ambition of Russia and of the supineness of the Government in resisting its encroachments."

The war fever.

Attacks on Lord Aberdeen; Rightly divining that Lord Aberdeen was heart and soul in favour of peace, they attacked him with an unmeasured severity, which grew in bitterness from day to day. With him was strangely mingled an illustrious personage, who could not, like Lord Aberdeen, defend himself. The peculiar position of Prince Albert, though it enabled him to do much good, rendered him also liable to much misunderstanding. The secrets of the Cabinet are supposed to be kept from every one except the Sovereign. But even Cabinet Ministers have wives, and the wife is not always the weaker vessel. Marriage is older than the Constitution, and beyond its reach. The Prince would have been more prudent if he had remained more in the background, and if he had been content to play the part, repudiated by William the Third, of his wife's gentleman usher, he would at least have escaped calumny. But he was a man,

and on Prince Albert.

[1] *Life of Lord Aberdeen*, p. 255.

and a statesman, and to be a Prince George of Denmark was for him impossible. He was in truth extremely conscientious, and if ever he made mistakes, it was a sense of duty which dictated them. But to the ignorant and gullible part of the nation, made more suspicious by newspapers on both sides of politics, he was simply a meddlesome German, careless of British interests, and yet directing British politics for his own purposes behind the scenes. The readers of the *Daily News*, of the *Morning Advertiser*, of the *Standard*, and of the *Morning Herald* were instructed to believe that Prince Albert was a "Russian," as every opponent of war was called, and that he had entered into a conspiracy with the Prime Minister to further the designs of the Emperor Nicholas. If His Royal Highness had done as much for peace as Lord Aberdeen did, it would have been highly creditable to his benevolence and wisdom. But as a matter of fact he steered a middle course between Lord Aberdeen and Lord Palmerston, coinciding as nearly as possible in opinion with Lord Clarendon. That he was German in his sympathies is of course true. It would have been unnatural if he had not been. Where the interests of his adopted country were not even alleged to be concerned, as in the case of Schleswig-Holstein, he frankly sided with the German Powers, and the Cabinet, ignoring his views, as frankly sided with Denmark. The rumour of his Russian proclivities was as pure an invention as the rumour that he had been committed for high treason. On the contrary he exerted all his influence, though without effect, to bring Prussia and Austria, especially Prussia, into line with the Western Powers. If he had succeeded, there would have been no war, and yet Turkey, not Russia, would have won the game. He ought perhaps to have foreseen that the Central Powers had objects of their

1853.

True position of the Prince.

1853. own, which were confined to the evacuation of the Principalities and the freedom of the Danube. But this want of foresight was shared by Lord Clarendon, by Mr. Gladstone, by Lord John Russell, and probably by the whole Cabinet except Lord Aberdeen.

The battle of Sinope.

Public feeling in England, already more than hot enough, was further inflamed at this time by the battle, falsely called the massacre, of Sinope.[1] On the 30th of November a Turkish squadron, anchored at Sinope, a Turkish port in the Black Sea, was attacked and destroyed by the Russian Admiral Nachimoff. Four thousand Turks are said to have perished on this occasion. Full intelligence of the engagement did not reach England till the 14th of December, when it was greeted with a storm of indignation quite unwarranted by the facts. Russia and Turkey were at war. Turkey had declared war against Russia. The destruction of an enemy's ships is a legitimate operation of warfare, and is not less legitimate because those ships are in one of their own harbours. The battle of Sinope was at least as regular a proceeding as the battle of Navarino, which, though described by the Duke as an "untoward event," was hailed with enthusiastic acclamation by Canningites and Whigs. Nevertheless the achievement of Admiral Nachimoff was denounced as an outrage upon our "ally," and there was a loud cry for vengeance. This is a misuse of the term "ally," more common then than now. There can be no allies without an alliance; and no alliance between Great Britain and Turkey existed in 1853. In declaring war against Russia, Turkey had repudiated British advice, given her for her own good, and had not therefore the claim to British protection which compliance with that advice would have given her.

[1] It was this event which first made the *Times* an advocate of war.

But Lord Stratford knew what he was talking about when on hearing of Sinope he exclaimed, "Thank God! that's war."[1] It is not to be supposed that the British Ambassador spoke in a spirit of bloodthirstiness. It was his firm and deliberate policy, to which he adhered in spite of all instructions from home, that Turkey should "settle accounts with Russia once for all." By diplomatic usage an Ambassador should have no policy, and if he disobeys instructions, he should be recalled. But Lord Stratford was no ordinary Ambassador, and he had to deal with no ordinary Government. His ascendency over the wretched creature who cowered in the Yildiz Kiosque, and over the creatures of that creature, was not diplomatic at all. It was like that of a huntsman over his dogs. When he cracked his whip, they came to heel. On the other hand, the state of his nominal masters in the Cabinet was utterly deplorable. There were thirteen of them, and they were at sixes and sevens. Lord Aberdeen could at any time have got a majority if he had taken a vote, as, for instance, upon Lord Stratford's recall. But disruption would have been the result, for Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston, and possibly some others, would have resigned. Lord Clarendon's despatches, always admirably written, were in substance a compromise, and Lord Stratford justly, or at least correctly, concluded that in the circumstances he could do as he pleased. His pleasure, in the sense of his inclination, was war.

1853.

Lord Stratford and the Cabinet.

At this point the evil genius of the drama again appeared upon the scene. The Emperor of the French called upon the British Government, not merely to send their fleet into the Black Sea together with his own, but further to join him in

The influence of Napoleon.

[1] Lord Stanmore's *Life of Lord Aberdeen*, p. 254; *Lord Malmesbury's Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 425; "Greville Memoirs," 20th February 1854.

1853. confining all Russian ships of war within the harbour of Sebastopol. The Cabinet, not yet despairing of peace, hesitated to take the latter step. They were waiting for the effect of a Protocol upon which the four Powers had agreed, and which, if Russia had accepted it, as Turkey did, would have restored peace to Europe. Count Nesselrode had told Sir Hamilton Seymour, after Sinope, that the Russian fleet had no intention of leaving Sebastopol again during the winter, and that the Czar would consent to the neutralisation of the Black Sea during the war. But of course, he added, if Russian ships were restrained from taking the offensive, a similar prohibition must be applied to Turkey. Just as the hopes of peace were reviving, Lord Palmerston, the strongest supporter of war in the Cabinet, suddenly resigned. His resignation, not altogether voluntary, had ostensibly nothing to do with foreign affairs.[1] He strongly objected to the Reform Bill which Lord John Russell was preparing for the Session of 1854. Lord Aberdeen as strongly supported Lord John, and virtually told Palmerston that if he would not accept the Bill, he could not continue in office. Meanwhile the French Emperor continued to press for the confinement of the Russian fleet to Sebastopol, knowing, as he must have known, that it would destroy all chance of the Vienna Protocol being accepted by the Czar. The Cabinet yielded, though Lord Aberdeen stipulated that all hostilities in the Black Sea, Turk or Russian, should be forbidden. Louis Napoleon had attained his object. War was inevitable now. Immediately after this

Dec. 16, resignation of Lord Palmerston.

The English and French fleets enter the Black Sea.

[1] It is, however, to be observed that Prince Albert had on the 21st of October drawn up a Memorandum in favour of exacting guarantees from the Sultan for the benefit of his Christian subjects, with which Lord Aberdeen and Lord John fully concurred, while Lord Palmerston expressed his emphatic dissent. The feud between Palmerston and the Court was by no means healed.

fatal decision Lord Palmerston was induced by the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Gladstone to withdraw his resignation, and Lord Aberdeen reluctantly accepted the withdrawal. The motive of Mr. Gladstone and the Duke appears to have been distrust of Lord John Russell, and dread of his ascendency in the Cabinet. For Lord John's behaviour at this period of his life it would be difficult to find a parallel among public men. He was alternately hinting that he ought to be Prime Minister, and threatening to resign. He claimed a voice in the disposal of patronage, to which he had no right, and a general superintendence over the business of all Departments which was simply grotesque. He denounced the misgovernment of Turkey in the strongest language, and he was eager to fight for Turkey against Russia. He refused the Home Office when Lord Palmerston vacated it, complained of his "intolerable position," and made Lord Aberdeen's position a burden to him. Lord Aberdeen did not resent this treatment. He was above it. His colleagues, however, resented it for him, and they would not do anything which might help to put Lord John at their head. Lord Palmerston's return to the Cabinet made very little difference, one way or the other. All hope of peace was gone. Lord Clarendon had expressed his "horror" at the battle of Sinope. There were much greater horrors to come. On the last day of the year the Vienna Protocol was accepted by the Sultan. But there was no longer any chance that it would be accepted by the Czar.

1853.

Lord Palmerston's return.

Lord John's pretensions.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FIRST PART OF THE RUSSIAN WAR

1854. On the 4th of January 1854 the English and French fleets entered the Black Sea. The Czar, of course, asked for explanations, but it is likely that he wanted to gain time. That an embargo should be put upon his own ships without his own consent was an affront to which an Autocrat of thirty years' standing could not be expected to submit. To the English Deputation from the Society of Friends,[1] which visited him at Petersburg, he was affable and polite. That he and Count Nesselrode believed these gentlemen, or the Peace Party in general, to have any real influence upon public opinion in England is incredible. It was Count Nesselrode's business to ascertain the truth, and nobody knew his business better than Count Nesselrode. They may have had some confidence in the pacific intentions of Lord Aberdeen, who continued to assert, and to believe, that there would be no war. Yet even Lord Aberdeen was now forced to say of his colleagues, "I labour for peace; but when I speak unto them thereof, they make them ready to

Drifting towards war.

Feb. 10.

[1] The members of the Deputation were Mr. Sturge from Birmingham, Mr. Charlton from Bristol, and Mr. Pease from Darlington. The Czar delighted them with his homeliness. "By the way," said he, "do you know my wife?" At the time of this visit the Russian Ambassador had actually left England.

battle."[1] The day after the entry of the fleets, the 5th of January, Charles Greville inserted this curious passage in his Diary: "Graham told me that Stratford was now really anxious for peace, for he began to see the possibility of war bringing about the substitution of French influence at Constantinople in place of Russian, and of the two he infinitely preferred the latter. Clarendon confirmed this." The only permanent influence at Constantinople is Russian, and that for obvious reasons. But if Lord Stratford really wished for peace in January 1854, which may be doubted, he was too late. The French Emperor did indeed make a theatrical and obviously insincere attempt to conciliate the man who would not call him brother. He wrote a letter in his own hand to his "good friend" the Czar, whom, by the way, his Ambassador[2] had congratulated upon the affair of Sinope. The details of this document are unimportant. What is important is the assurance with which the man of December used the name of the Queen. "France as well as England," he wrote, "will be compelled to leave to the fate of arms and the chances of war that which might now be settled by reason and justice." This letter was communicated to the British Government before it was sent, but the alterations suggested by Lord Clarendon were not made. The explanation why the ships were sent into the Black Sea made it clear that they were entirely directed against Russia, and not against Turkey at all. The old Emperor was not fond of the new one, and the letter did no good. Baron Brunnow, the Russian Ambassador, a devoted friend of England, and an admirer of Lord Palmerston's, was in despair. But

1854.

The French Emperor's letter to the Czar.

Jan. 29.

[1] Lord Stanmore's *Life of Lord Aberdeen*, p. 245.

[2] M. Castelbajac, an ardent friend of Russia, and a courtier of the Czar.

1854.

Popular enthusiasm for war.

war did not immediately ensue. Parliament met on the 31st of January, and Greville remarks that the mob received the Turkish Ambassador with far more enthusiasm than the Queen. The debate in the House of Lords disclosed the policy of the Opposition. It was to be more warlike than the Government, and to exalt Lord Palmerston at the expense of Lord Aberdeen. The aggression of Russia, and the vacillation of the Cabinet, were Lord Derby's principal topics. It was a perfectly fair line to take, and it was undoubtedly popular.[1] Lord Grey alone, with a sanity which should not have been conspicuous, argued in his dry, lucid way that it was no business of ours to interfere between Russia and Turkey. Lord Aberdeen conclusively demonstrated the groundlessness of the charges against Prince Albert, and very properly pointed out that they had not been confined to the Radical Press. Lord Palmerston was at the time suspected, both at the Court and elsewhere, of being concerned in these scandalous invectives. But he denied it, and there was no evidence to prove it. The paper which habitually drew its inspiration from him, the *Morning Post*, took no part in the attacks upon the Prince. In the House of Commons, Lord John Russell was not less emphatic than Lord Aberdeen, Mr. Walpole supported him, and the accusations were not in public renewed.

Refutation of the charges against Prince Albert.

Time passed, and all Europe waited in tremulous suspense for what every one felt to be coming. But still the Emperor of Russia did not declare war. On the 4th of February, Baron Brunnow announced to Lord Clarendon that he should have to leave London, and on the 7th Sir Hamilton Seymour was directed by Lord Clarendon to leave

The withdrawal of the Ambassadors.

[1] "In a case of this kind," said Lord Aberdeen, "I dread popular support." — Lord Stanmore's *Life of Lord Aberdeen*, p. 256.

Petersburg. But the withdrawal of Ambassadors, or even the cessation of diplomatic intercourse, does not always lead to actual hostilities. The Czar temporised with the Vienna Protocol, putting forward by way of counter-proposal that negotiations should be conducted directly between Petersburg and Constantinople. But Austria declined to accept the Russian modifications, and proposed that Russia should be forthwith summoned to evacuate the Principalities. This strengthened the war party in the Cabinet, because it seemed clearly to follow that Austria would take an active part against Russia by means more forcible than diplomacy. 1854.

Under these desperate conditions Lord John Russell, on the 13th February, introduced his Reform Bill. This Bill, which went no further, was a faint and feeble reflection of the great measure introduced by its author in 1831. It would have disfranchised boroughs where the population was below five thousand, and would have reduced the franchise to ten pounds in the counties, to six pounds in the towns. Such were the revolutionary proposals which could provoke a Cabinet crisis in 1854. One or two minor provisions deserve a passing notice. Some public bodies, including the Inns of Court, those nurseries of rational progress, were to be represented in the House of Commons, thus anticipating the "fancy franchises" afterwards destroyed by the pungent ridicule of John Bright. Minorities were in some instances to be protected by the experiment, actually tried in later years, of giving only two votes to each elector in constituencies which returned three members, and Ministers were not to vacate their seats on taking office. This last provision was almost enough to un-Whig Lord John for life. It is impossible not to admire the determination of the veteran reformer, and the An untimely Reform Bill.

1854.

loyalty of the Prime Minister to a colleague of whom he had so much reason to complain. But the Bill was not wanted. It pleased nobody, and its chances were hopeless. To the Radicals it was a mockery, to the Whigs a stumbling-block, to the Tories an opportunity.

The very day after it was introduced, Lord Clarendon used in the House of Lords a phrase which has become historic, though with an important variation from the original form. "We are drifting," said the Foreign Secretary, not into war, but "towards war." "Drifting into war" would have been a confession of abject helplessness. "Drifting towards war" was an accurate though scarcely a felicitous account of events passing before men's eyes. Lord Grey uttered once more a warning note. "We are arming," said he, "to defend a phantasm, for the maintenance of the oppressor's domination." If he meant to impute motives, Lord Grey went too far. But if the maxim of the criminal law be right, and men must be taken to intend the natural consequences of their acts, it would be difficult to dispute the soundness of this epigrammatic analysis. Lord John Russell might well have laid it to heart. Those who go about to defend such phantasms as the independence of the Ottoman Empire must leave the solid realities of legislation to their wiser successors in happier times, even if those successors should be themselves. Lord Aberdeen now stood almost alone among the vocal members of his Cabinet in favour of peace. He steadily and courageously, in public and in private, declined to regard war as inevitable until it had occurred. It is easy, in looking back, to see that his hopes were vain. But if there be any truth in the saying, "Blessed are the peace-makers," the Minister who, having faithfully served his country for half a century,

The defence of a phantasm.

Lord Aberdeen's last efforts for peace.

now laboured day and night to rescue her from the guilt of a Turkish alliance and the horrors of a Russian campaign, deserves from the late justice of posterity a tribute of something warmer than gratitude, and something higher than respect. At the close of his life Lord Aberdeen was wont to cite the Ecclesiastical Titles Act and the Crimean War as the two greatest errors committed in his time, and to add that they were both demanded by public opinion. To the first he offered in Opposition a strenuous, though an unavailing resistance. In the second he became, as head of the Government, a reluctant participator. But no one did or could reproach him with undue love of office. He was anxious, perhaps too anxious, to be relieved from its burdens and responsibilities. He remained for the sole purpose, and as the last chance, of preserving an honourable peace. 1854.

But it was war which Lord Palmerston wanted, and it was war for which the Opposition were clamouring. In the House of Commons Mr. Disraeli, who had been bitterly disappointed by Palmerston's return to Downing Street, accused the Government of "credulity or connivance." Lord Palmerston replied to him in the consecrated formula of a Minister who knows that his best argument will be found in the division-lobby. "If you don't trust us," he said, "turn us out." The retort was practically conclusive. For to turn the Government out would have been to vote in favour of peace, and to vote in favour of peace would have been unpopular. Yet at this juncture Count Buol, the Austrian Chancellor, made to the French Ambassador at Vienna a communication which, had it been sincere, might have averted war. If, he said, England and France would fix a date for the evacuation of the Danubian Principalities by

The policy of Austria.

1854. Russia, Austria would support them. He did not, however, explain that, as almost immediately appeared, it was only diplomatic support he meant. Meanwhile, as the days slipped by, the chances of peace dwindled into nothingness. "The rage for this war," wrote Greville on the 25th of February 1854, "gets every day more vehement, and nobody seems to fear anything, but that we may not spend money and men enough in waging it. The few sober people who have courage enough to hint at its being impolitic and uncalled for are almost hooted down, and their warnings and scruples are treated with indignation and contempt." Mr. Cobden, for example, pointed out the remarkable fact that the majority of the Sultan's subjects were on the side of Russia, but the only response he got was that they ought to know better. As a climax of make-believe "the Sultan" issued a firman purporting to overthrow the Koran, upon which his Crown, as well as his salvation, rested, and to put the evidence of Christian dogs on an equality with the word of true believers. So great and so prolonged had been the strain that it was almost a relief even to opponents of the war when at last, on the 27th of February, Lord Clarendon took the decisive step. Writing directly to Count Nesselrode, as the Ambassador had been withdrawn, and relying upon the Austrian promise of assistance, he demanded the evacuation of the Principalities by the 30th of April. An answer was required within six days. A precisely similar demand was made by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Drouyn de Lhuys. The Emperor Nicholas ordered that to these despatches no reply should be given, and on both sides immediate preparations were made for war. The formal declarations were issued by France on the 27th, and by England on the 28th of March. But war really began when the

The weakness of the peace party.

The Ultimatum of the Western Powers.

Czar declined to answer the despatches. The effect was in one way wholesome. The constant incitements to action ceased, and there fell upon the nation for the moment a great calm. As the hero of *Maud* said in his haste, "the long, long canker of peace" was "over and done." 1854. The declaration of war.

With the end of parley, and the beginning of strife, the position of the Government became more secure. The war party were bound to give them assistance in the prosecution of the war. The peace party, even if they had been numerically strong enough to make themselves felt in elections or divisions, would not have turned Lord Aberdeen out to put Lord Derby in. The publication of the Eastern Papers dispelled the idea of subservience to Russia, and Lord Clarendon's despatches were much admired. The first detachment of British troops sailed on the 28th of February for Malta on their way to Gallipoli in the Dardanelles, where they arrived, after a month in Malta, at the beginning of April. To command the whole British force the Government chose General Lord Raglan. Lord Raglan, under his former name of Lord Fitzroy Somerset, had served with the Duke in the Peninsula and at Waterloo. He was at this time Master General of the Ordnance, and therefore second only to the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Hardinge. He was sixty-six, and it was long since he had been in battle. From a military point of view, Sir Colin Campbell, afterwards Lord Clyde, would probably have been a better choice. But the command was a peculiar one, and required diplomatic as well as soldierly aptitude. It was necessary that the English commander should act in concert with the French, and for this purpose Lord Raglan was peculiarly well fitted. For he had a charm of manner which no one could resist, and that perfect tact which seems to come only by instinct. He

The security of the Government.

Sailing of the first detachment.

Lord Raglan.

1854.

Marshal St. Arnaud.

had need of it all. For his colleague was Achille St. Arnaud, formerly Jacques Leroy, since December 1851 a Marshal of France. This man was a dashing soldier of fortune, and had shown capacity, as well as energy, in Algiers. He had also the rare sort of courage, or rather endurance, which enables a man to appear in public and on horseback while suffering agony from a mortal disease. But he was an adventurer of the lowest type, and to be the chief of an army he had no real qualification. His appointment was a scandal, and it was a degradation for England, not the last which Louis Napoleon inflicted on her, that one of her most chivalrous soldiers should be associated with a midnight plotter who had been bought for money. Of the fleet which was to operate in the Baltic the Government placed Admiral Sir Charles Napier, the hero of Acre, at the head. Sir Charles, though he had distinguished himself in action, was very much inferior to his cousin and namesake, the conqueror of Scinde, nor did he justify the confidence reposed in him. He was sent off, however, with a great flourish of trumpets, and with a dinner at the Reform Club. At this dinner, which was held on the 7th of March, Lord Palmerston presided, and delivered a speech of laborious jocosity in the worst possible taste. Sir James Graham followed, and in the style of Thackeray's Valoroso gave his "gallant friend" leave to declare war. A few days afterwards Mr. Bright called attention to these unfortunate speeches in the House of Commons, and with the full assent of many who did not share his views about the war, declared such language at such a time to be unworthy "the responsible statesmen of a civilised and Christian nation."[1] Lord Palmerston's reply

Admiral Sir Charles Napier.

The dinner at the Reform Club.

[1] Macaulay, one of Palmerston's warmest admirers, thus wrote in his diary: "Palmerston's want of temper, judgment, and good breeding, was almost incredible. He did himself more harm in three minutes

was a repetition and aggravation of the offence. 1854.
He began by calling Mr. Bright "the honourable and reverend gentleman." He went on to describe him as unfit to be a member of the Reform Club, and continued in a similar strain. But for once he had failed to hit the temper of the House, and his impertinences fell flat. Sir Charles Napier's performances in the Baltic were trivial and futile. Elsewhere the war was grimly tragical, and there could hardly have been a less fitting prelude to it than a Secretary of State playing the part of an elderly buffoon.

March 6, the first war Budget.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced his Budget in a very different spirit. He was able to pronounce that British finance was on a sound and solid footing. But for the estimates required by the approaching war, there would have been a surplus of eleven hundred thousand pounds. As it was, he had to reckon upon a deficiency of nearly three millions, to meet which he proposed that the Income Tax should be doubled for half the year, and the whole of it collected in the first six months. He strongly protested against having recourse to a loan, which he described as "not required by our necessities, and not worthy of our adoption." The Budget was passed without the smallest difficulty, although Mr. Disraeli denounced what he called "a Coalition War," and exclaimed, "You are going to war with an opponent who does not want to fight, and you are unwilling to encounter him." It was a fixed idea with Disraeli that either a Whig or a Tory Administration would have kept the peace, though he never committed himself to disapproval of the war, and he declined Mr. Gladstone's challenge to a vote of no confidence. Mr. Disraeli, however,

than all his enemies and detractors throughout the world have been able to do him in twenty years." — Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*, vol. ii. p. 378.

1854.

to do him justice, abstained from the wild and undignified abuse of Russia in which many who should have set a higher example indulged. Lord Shaftesbury, for instance, to the great delight of Lord Clarendon, declared that the war was a "just and inevitable quarrel" with a country which had been guilty of religious intolerance. As a prominent supporter of Jewish disabilities, Lord Shaftesbury was a good judge of intolerance; but when he came to contrast the mild and tolerant rule of the Sultan with the ferocious bigotry of the Czar, even Lord Clarendon must have smiled. For the conversion of a Mohammedan to Christianity is by the Koran a capital offence, and it is extremely improbable that the offender would in Turkey be left to the slow operation of the law.

Russian guilt and Turkish innocence.

The treaty between England and France for preserving the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and the balance of power in Europe, was signed on the 12th of March. Well might the French Emperor say, with the successful villain in the story, "The ways of Providence sometimes appear to be crooked. They are in reality straight." Little more than two years had elapsed since his murderous usurpation of supreme power in France against the ordinances which he had sworn to obey, and now he was joining himself with the Queen of England to defend the public law of Europe against a legitimate Sovereign whose methods were at least above board. For Jonathan Wild the Little this was elevation indeed. Englishmen proud of their country's honour could scarcely regret that the Duke of Wellington was dead. On the 24th of March the Russians crossed the Danube at three points, and invaded Turkey. On the 28th, the day that war was formally declared between England and Russia, the Greek Minister left Constantinople, the Turkish Minister left Athens, and Greek resi-

dents were expelled from the Turkish Empire. The Christian subjects of the Porte were unhappily too scattered and too disorganised to rise in a body and throw off the tyranny by which they were oppressed. But they did rebel in Epirus; they were very properly supported by the King of Greece, and it required the active intervention of two Christian Powers to keep these Christians down. The same number of the *London Gazette* which contained the declaration of war announced also that the right to seize enemy's goods, not being contraband of war, in neutral vessels would during the continuance of hostilities be waived.

1854.

Expulsion of Greek residents from Turkey.

Waiver of the right of search.

The Queen's Message of War was considered by both Houses of Parliament on the 31st of March. By this time Turkey, as well as France, was, in the strict and proper sense of the term, an ally of Great Britain, for on the 10th of March the Western Powers had entered into a treaty with the Sultan, by which they pledged themselves to defend Turkey with their arms until the conclusion of a peace should have secured His Majesty's rights and the "independence of the Ottoman Empire." When such a peace had been concluded they were to withdraw all their forces from Turkish territory. The Sultan undertook to make no separate peace or armistice with Russia. This singular instrument was, in the language of the Roman law, a leonine contract, by which Turkey took everything and gave nothing. The Sultan received from the greatest naval, and one of the greatest military, Powers in the world a promise to protect him in the permanent and unlimited enjoyment of rights which he had grievously abused. He said on his part, no doubt with Oriental gravity, that in consideration of support which was worth as much to him as his kingdom he would graciously abstain from placing himself

The Queen's Message.

Treaty between the Western Powers and Turkey.

1854. in the hands of his most deadly foe. If the Opposition in England had had the courage to denounce this covenant as insane, the historian would have to confess that they had chosen the word in the English language best fitted to describe it. If there had been an Opposition in France things would have gone hardly with M. Drouyn de Lhuys. But England was deluded, and France was enslaved. It was not easy to frame the Queen's Message to Parliament in appropriate words without justifying the speeches of Bright, Cobden, and Grey. Her Majesty's Ministers were equal to the occasion. Having just made Turkey into an ally, they boldly stated that allies must be supported. They further alleged that the independence of that ally, which was a transparent fiction, was essential to the peace of Europe, which they had just broken themselves. Finally, they intimated their resolve to save Europe from the preponderance of a Power which had violated the faith of treaties, though the only treaty which had been violated was the Treaty of Kainardji, and though that treaty had been violated by Turkey in the interests of France. Such are the shifts to which men are driven when they dare not speak the truth. For the truth was that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland had been dragged into a war from which they could gain nothing, and might lose much through the restless ambition of Louis Napoleon, supported in the Cabinet by Lord Palmerston, and outside it by Lord Stratford, both personal enemies of the Emperor Nicholas. Another point which Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli might fairly have taken, though not an equally good one, was the haste which despatched the Ultimatum of the 27th of February without waiting for the response of Austria and Prussia to the offers of the Czar. For the only cause of the war which would bear a

moment's critical examination was the dangerous preponderance of Russia in the affairs of Europe, and that was a question for Europe as a whole. It is practically certain that even the Emperor Nicholas, arbitrary and despotic as he was, would have yielded to demands which the four Powers were prepared to back by force, though it is doubtful whether his brother-in-law, the King of Prussia, and his personal favourite, the Emperor of Austria, would have fought for anything except and beyond the evacuation of Wallachia and Moldavia. This, however, it will be remembered, was the subject, and the sole subject, of the final and fatal despatches addressed to Count Nesselrode by Lord Clarendon and M. Drouyn de Lhuys. But the Opposition threw away their chances. They were as blind as the Government. They listened complacently in the House of Lords while Lord Clarendon talked about Poland and the independence of Europe, forgetting that the Czar might with equal relevance talk about Ireland, and that the real ruler of Turkey was an Englishman. Lord Derby did, indeed, point out, with perfect justice, that there had been no deception on the part of Russia, who had avowed from the first that she claimed a general protectorate over the millions of Christians in Turkey professing the faith of the Greek Church. But from that he passed to a personal eulogy of the French Emperor, which was most offensive to the more serious part of the French nation. Among the numerous evils produced by alliance with Louis Napoleon, not the least was the profound and prolonged alienation from England of the best intellects and the best characters in France.

1854.

The balance of power a European question.

The French Emperor *v.* the French nation.

Lord Aberdeen, who disapproved of the Russian War in 1854 as much as Mr. Pitt disapproved of the French War in 1793, compared himself with

1854.

The case against Lord Aberdeen.

Falkland, the ingeminator of peace. Lord Aberdeen is morally, though not of course constitutionally, free from responsibility for the Crimean War. For the notion that if he had spoken more firmly the Czar would have given way is akin to the Chinese theory that battles can be won by wearing hideous masks, and uttering horrible sounds. The Czar would have yielded to united Europe, and to nothing else. The real charge against Lord Aberdeen is that, like Pitt, he remained in office, and carried out a policy which his judgment condemned. The defence of Pitt lies outside the scope of this work. The defence of Lord Aberdeen is that he believed his continuance at the head of the Government was the only chance of preserving peace. It is an inadequate plea, not because he failed — 'tis not in mortals to command success — but because, from the best possible motives he condoned what he felt to be a blunder and a crime. To say at what precise point he should have resigned is difficult.[1] But it should have been before the issue of the despatch which sent Admiral Dundas into the Black Sea. He would certainly have done so if he had consulted his own ease and dignity. The venomous attacks of Mr. Disraeli, who always seemed to resent the Coalition as a personal grievance, were the smallest of the trials he had to bear.

The answer.

The Russian interpretation of the Vienna Note.

Lord John Russell, speaking to the Queen's Message in the House of Commons, described the Russian interpretation of the Vienna Note as fraudulent. He might as well have called it homicidal. It was the meaning which any lawyer retained by Russia would have put upon it before an international tribunal, and in all probability the Court would have decided in his favour. For it

[1] He might have insisted on Turkey being told that if she went to war with Russia she would not be supported by England.

was also, as Lord John conveniently forgot, the interpretation of the Turks themselves, though it was doubtless suggested to them by the British Ambassador at Constantinople. Mr. Bright and Lord Granby, in strange alliance, argued, without being answered, that there was nothing in the demands of Russia which the Sultan ought to have refused. Their reasonings were unheeded. A still stranger alliance was at hand. It was signed between Great Britain and France on the 10th of April. It bound them to united action in favour of the most desolating tyranny which has ever afflicted Europe. In this treaty, not now otherwise remarkable, England and France renounced all aim at separate advantages, and declared their readiness to receive into their alliance any of the other European Powers. The renunciation was nugatory, for neither joint nor separate advantages were or could be obtained either by England or by France. But the last clause — the invitation clause — led to consequences which no one at that time foresaw except the sagacious and long-sighted Minister of King Victor Emmanuel.[1] This treaty had been immediately preceded by a protocol drawn up at Vienna on the 9th of April in the names of Count Buol, the Austrian Chancellor, Count Bourqueney, the French Ambassador, Lord Westmorland, the British Ambassador, and the Prussian Minister, Count Arnim. By this document the four Powers acknowledged the declaration of war to be founded in right, though in what right was not stated, and added that they agreed in the object of reconciling the liberties of the Porte's Christian subjects with the independence of the Sultan and the integrity of his dominions. But the claims of the butcher are not to be reconciled with the liberty of the lamb. On the 11th of

1854.

The second Anglo-French Treaty.

[1] Count Camillo Benso Cavour.

1854. April, the day after the treaty, and two days after the protocol, the Emperor of Russia put forth his declaration of war, asserting that "England and France have ranged themselves by the side of the enemies of Christianity against Russia fighting for the orthodox faith." As a rule, when monarchs vicariously take up arms, the less they say about religion the better. But in this case the Czar was not, at least technically, the aggressor, and he could say with perfect truth that he was waging a religious war. A religious war may be the worst and wickedest of all wars. That Russia was fighting for her co-religionists in Turkey did not prove that her adversaries were in the wrong. The fact, however, could not be denied by any one, and that being so, it was natural that the Czar should appeal to the pious enthusiasm of his subjects.

The Czar's religious appeal to his subjects.

The war was now a reality, and nothing else was regarded in England. Lord John Russell, after many threats of resignation, yielded to his colleagues and withdrew his Reform Bill on the 11th of April. On this occasion he shed tears, which moved the House of Commons to sympathy at the time, though it is difficult not to smile at them now. The wounded vanity of an egoistical Minister might have found some more suitable time for its exhibition than the approach of a conflict which was to throw half England into mourning. About a fortnight later Lord John had a more serious task to fulfil. He had to defend the expulsion of Greek residents from Turkey against the indignant protest of Mr. Cobden. It was an absolutely lawless act, and it was carried out with extreme harshness. But Turkey was now our "ally," and everything she did had to be defended. Indeed, before the month of May was out England and France actually declared the ports of Greece to be blockaded,

Withdrawal of the Reform Bill.

1854.

The blockade of Greek ports.

because the Greek Christians of Epirus had risen in revolt against intolerable wrong. And this was the act of statesmen who had applauded the battle of Navarino.

Lord Raglan arrived at Constantinople at the beginning of May, and was followed by Marshal St. Arnaud, whom he had previously met in Paris on the 11th of April. At the same time Mr. Gladstone announced to the House of Commons that the Income Tax must be doubled for the whole year, and not merely for six months. It was thus raised from sevenpence to one and twopence in the pound. A shilling a gallon was added to the duty on Scottish whisky, and eightpence a gallon to the duty on Irish. An additional sixpence was levied upon each hundredweight of sugar, and the malt tax was raised from two and ninepence to four shillings. All these were to be considered as war taxes, except the tax on sugar. Mr. Gladstone's speech was not much to the taste of the war party in the House. He protested once more against war loans, though by the issue of Exchequer Bills he anticipated to some extent the ingathering of the taxes. He showed the bad effect of the loans raised by Pitt in the early years of the war with France, and contrasted them with the results of the Income Tax which the same statesman afterwards imposed. The pressure of taxation was needed, said Mr. Gladstone, to dissuade people from entering lightly into quarrels, and from continuing them after their objects had been attained. This was unpopular doctrine, but none the less wholesome for that. The Budget passed without opposition. The country was in a mood to make any sacrifices for the war.

May 8, the second war Budget.

On the 19th of May a conference was held at Varna, a Turkish port in the Black Sea, between

1854.

The first council of war.

Lord Raglan, Marshal St. Arnaud, and Omar Pasha. Six days after it British and French troops were landed at the Piræus, King Otho was compelled to sign a declaration of neutrality, and the Greek ships of war in the harbour were seized. This high-handed step was followed, as has already been said, by a blockade of the Greek ports.

The new Secretaryship of State.

At this time important changes were made in the Cabinet, and in the organisation of the public service, for which most of the credit belongs to Lord John Russell. Hitherto there had been no separate Secretary of State for War. The Secretary of State for the Colonies was the Secretary for War also. The Secretary at War, though he sometimes, as in 1853 and 1854, sat in the Cabinet, was subordinate to the Commander-in-Chief, and had only financial duties to perform. He resembled as nearly as possible the Financial Secretary to the War Office of our day. But he had nothing to do with the commissariat, which was under the Treasury, with the ordnance, which was under a Board, or with the militia, who were under the Home Office. This arrangement, though it existed throughout the Peninsular campaign, was not adapted to the exigencies of modern warfare. The Government of Lord Aberdeen, with the sanction of the House of Commons, created a Secretary of State for War, and removed the care of the commissariat from the Treasury to the War Office. With the other anomalies they did not meddle. The first Secretary of State for War was unluckily the Duke of Newcastle, the one incompetent administrator trained by Sir Robert Peel. The best man for the post would have been, as events afterwards proved, Mr. Cardwell. But Lord Palmerston would have been far better than the Duke. Lord John Russell refused the Colonies, and at his earnest request

The Duke of Newcastle.

the Colonial Office was given to Sir George Grey, then Member for Morpeth, as some reparation for the injustice with which Lord John thought that the Whigs had been treated when the Cabinet was formed. Lord John had claims of his own. He was tired of being without a salary, and he insisted on being President of the Council. No commoner had held this position since the reign of Henry the Eighth. That no doubt was a technicality and a trifle. The substantial difficulty was that Lord Granville held it, and that there was no excuse for turning him out. But while the rest of the world had been thinking of the war Lord John had been thinking of himself, with the result that the Presidency of the Council he must and would have. Lord Aberdeen should have peremptorily refused to comply with so shameless a demand. But he still regarded Lord John as indispensable, and Lord Granville, the most modest of men, stepped down to the Duchy of Lancaster. The Chancellor of the Duchy, Mr. Strutt, was removed from the Government altogether, to be subsequently consoled with the Barony of Belper. Still Lord John was not satisfied. He thought that he ought to have all the patronage, with the direction of every department, and he continued to worry Lord Aberdeen with letters which it is hard to believe that one gentleman could have brought himself to write, and another gentleman could have brought himself to endure.[1] Meanwhile Lord Lyndhurst, then in the prime of his octogenarian vigour, thought it necessary to come forward, and to warn his countrymen against the spirit of moderation. As if there were a danger that the policy and designs of Russia would be too charitably construed, he set himself to inflame

1854.

Lord John's personal claims.

Lord Lyndhurst.

[1] Sir Spencer Walpole's *Life of Lord John Russell*, vol. ii. pp. 227–237.

1854. passions, and to inculcate revenge. It was a wonderful display of eloquence and power, but no demagogue engaged in "setting class against class" was ever more justly liable to the censure of the historian. Lord Clarendon took the opportunity afforded him by Lord Lyndhurst to express his confident belief that Austria would take the field on behalf of the allies. It is strange that he should have clung to this expectation, which Lord Palmerston never shared. But Lord Westmorland, the British Ambassador at Vienna, was not competent to his post, and did not keep his Government properly informed. In this debate Lord Derby, declaring that the Black Sea must not be made "a Russian lake," pointed out what should have been abundantly clear, that neither Austria nor Prussia cared for anything beyond the evacuation of the Principalities. Lord Aberdeen expressed his hope of an early peace, and with chivalrous imprudence defended Russia from the charge of being an aggressive Power. He said nothing which was not true. "Aggressive" is a comparative term, and the Emperor Nicholas must have regarded Lord Dalhousie with envy and despair. But at that moment to say a word for Russia was treason, and Lord Aberdeen had a few nights afterwards to explain that he did not really want a Russian garrison at Constantinople.

Lord Aberdeen's imprudence.

The beginning of the war.

The news from the seat of war was at this time favourable. In the Baltic the Aland Islands were seized, and the fortress of Bomarsund destroyed by Napier's fleet. The Turkish garrison of Silistria on the Danube had been long besieged by Russian troops, and its surrender was expected. But through the skill and enterprise of two young English officers, Captain Butler and Lieutenant Nasmyth, Silistria held out until on the 23rd of June the siege was raised. Five days afterwards

The siege of Silistria.

the Cabinet dined with Lord John Russell at Pembroke Lodge, and while the Duke of Newcastle read his momentous despatch, proposing that invasion of the Crimea upon which the whole course of the war depended, some of the Ministers fell asleep. This was the sort of incident in which Kinglake delighted, and he has made the most of it.[1] It is not perhaps very creditable to responsible statesmen at such a time. But as a matter of fact the question had been previously decided, and the despatch represented the opinions of the sleepers, as well as of those who kept awake.[2] The truth is that everybody was calling for the invasion of the Crimea, and that the Duke of Newcastle coincided with public opinion when he proposed it. The *Times*, then at the height of its power and influence, took up and enforced the popular view, as in the Cabinet did Lord Palmerston.

1854.

The drowsy Cabinet.

The Crimea, the peninsula which Southern Russia projects into the Black Sea, is the Tauric Chersonese of the ancients, familiar to all readers of Euripides. Its supreme importance was that it contained the great naval arsenal of Sebastopol, the harbour of Russia's southern fleet, and the most valuable of all the Czar's resources in time of war. The Duke of Newcastle's despatch to Lord Raglan was not peremptory in its terms, and left the General's discretion formally unfettered. But Lord Raglan was a sensitive man, and though he had serious doubts about the wisdom of the plan himself, he felt that the despatch was a challenge, if not a command, and he prepared to obey orders. The policy of the whole Cabinet, including Lord Aberdeen, was to carry on the war, now that it had actually

The Crimea.

[1] *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. ii. pp. 93–95. See also note in Appendix.

[2] Walpole's *Life of Lord John Russell*, vol. ii. p. 223.

1854. begun, with all possible despatch, and the invasion of the Crimea was not only feasible, but judicious. It was the shortest road to success, if only it had been quickly followed. Ministers were not backward. Before the end of July they had obtained a vote of credit for three millions from the House of Commons, after a speech in which Lord Palmerston, referring to the French alliance, emphatically exclaimed, "I care not who else joins us, or who else stands aloof!"

On the 2nd of August the Russians, harassed by Omar Pasha's troops, and threatened by the Central Powers, recrossed the Pruth. Thus the Danubian Principalities were evacuated, and the ostensible object of the war was achieved. It mattered not that they were evacuated at the bidding of Austria, who occupied them herself before the end of the month. The thing was done. Turkey in Europe was free from the invader, and there was no longer any material guarantee for the protectorate of Greek Christians which Russia claimed. But the war went on as if nothing had happened. On the 6th of August the Turks suffered a heavy defeat at Kuruk-Derè, owing to the incompetence of their commander, Kurshid Pasha, and were shut up for many weary months at Kars. When Parliament was prorogued on the twelfth, no practical means had been taken to carry out the plan of campaign suggested by the Cabinet through the Secretary of State for War. Lord Raglan was not his own master. Before he could move a step, he had to obtain the concurrence of his French colleague, who was appointed not because of what he knew about war, but because of what he knew about Louis Napoleon.

The evacuation of the Principalities.

The siege of Kars.

Raglan and St. Arnaud.

The session of 1854 was not a triumphant one for the Government. Whatever they wanted for

the war they readily obtained, but on other subjects they were at the mercy of a capricious and fluctuating mass in the House of Commons. Indeed Lord John Russell had less hold upon that House than Lord Aberdeen had upon the House of Lords. Lord Malmesbury records in his diary for the 12th of May a characteristic saying of the single-minded patriot who sat immediately opposite to Lord John. "Disraeli is furious with the war, which he thinks keeps the Government in." By his inexhaustible torrent of sarcasm and invective Mr. Disraeli made things very uncomfortable for the Leader of the House. Nor did he lack material. Taking up the Jewish question once more, Lord John, in a very sensible Bill, proposed to substitute a simple oath of allegiance for all the cumbrous forms employed. It was the most rational solution of the difficulty he had yet proposed. But it united with the opponents of the Jews those ardent Protestants who took a positive pleasure in abjuring the Catholic Faith, and the Bill was rejected by 251 votes to 247. Mr. Disraeli voted against it for reasons which never had any weight, and at this distance of time have lost their interest. When he attacked the Government for remaining in office after this defeat, Lord John very properly replied that the country was in a state of war. Nothing but a vote of No Confidence would have justified Ministers in resigning.

1854.

The Government and the House of Commons.

The Parliamentary oath.

Defeat of the Government.

The Bill for the reform of Oxford University produced a series of divisions unfavourable to the Government, some of which were reversed in the House of Lords. The Bill, the charter of modern Oxford, substituted a new governing body on the elective principle for the old Hebdomadal Board, which was simply the Heads of Houses; opened the close Fellowships; made a provision for private

The Oxford University Bill.

1854.

halls; and created the modern Professoriate by means of a contribution from the funds of the Colleges to the funds of the University itself. Lord John had no personal experience of Universities, and he relied much upon the assistance of Mr. Gladstone. But Mr. Gladstone was not in those days an ardent reformer, and even if he had been, his position as Member for Oxford would have stood in his way. The result was that the Bill did nothing for Dissenters, who were excluded from Oxford because they could not subscribe to the Articles of the Church before matriculation. An amendment to abolish this subscription was carried against the Government by a majority of 91, and it was afterwards, with the assent of the Treasury Bench, enlarged to include a Bachelor's degree. From fellowships, from scholarships, and from the superior degrees, which conferred the right of voting in Convocation and for Parliament, Nonconformists were still for many years obstinately excluded. The removal of their disabilities was supported by Lord Stanley, Lord Derby's eldest son, who remained through life a moderate Liberal, though he did not always call himself by the name. Lord Derby himself tried to weaken the Bill in the Lords, and to make it more Conservative. But the majorities against him were so conclusive that he gave up the attempt in despair, remarking that the Government could do what they liked in that House. This great social and intellectual reform, which admitted to Oxford, though not to places of honour and emolument in it, Nonconformists, freethinkers, Roman Catholics, and Jews, was carried by the force of independent Parliamentary opinion against the Ministry and the regular Opposition combined. Lord John Russell was so much annoyed by the obvious, though scarcely surpris-

The Government again defeated, June 22.

Strength of Ministers in the Lords.

ing, decline of his authority, that he called a meeting of his supporters in the middle of July, and remonstrated with them, after which there was no further trouble for the remainder of the session. But the relations between the Prime Minister and his principal lieutenant were strained almost to the point of breaking. Two legal reforms of more than legal importance were carried before the prorogation of 1854. A last tribute was paid to the genius of Bentham by the repeal of the usury laws, and jurors who had conscientious scruples against taking an oath were permitted to affirm. Another measure, introduced and carried by Lord John Russell, did something to cheapen and, what was really the same thing, to purify elections by providing that full accounts must be published after the poll, and that no payment should be made except through authorised agents. The repeal of the Navigation Laws, having falsified all the predictions of its opponents, was this year extended, with much public advantage, to the coasting trade. During the summer of 1854, besides her other anxieties, England was visited by a serious attack of Asiatic cholera. The sanitary improvements to which it gave rise were successful in preventing its return, and thus completely justified Lord Palmerston's famous advice to the Presbytery of Edinburgh. Parliament was prorogued by the Queen in person for the last time on the 12th of August. On such occasions it was customary for the Speaker, then Mr. Shaw Lefevre, to address the Sovereign in a speech reviewing the session. But the Queen "disliked receiving instruction in public,"[1] and henceforward always prorogued Parliament by Commission.

1854.

Lord John's position.

Legal reform.

Purity of elections.

The cholera.

By the beginning of August the English and French commanders had agreed upon the general

[1] *Queen Victoria, a Biography*, by Sidney Lee, p. 246.

1854.

The landing of the allied forces.

plan of the Crimean expedition. By the middle of September thirty thousand French soldiers, twenty-seven thousand English, and seven thousand Turks had landed at Old Fort, in Calamita Bay. On the early morning of the 19th, in mild and lovely weather, they began their march to Sebastopol. Their strength was grievously impaired by cholera, from which they had suffered severely ever since their landing, and before.[1] But sickness did not delay their advance, and on the 20th they encountered a large force of Russians under Prince Mentschikoff, who occupied the heights above the Alma. The Russian army consisted of fifty thousand men, effectively placed on the slopes of the hills ascending from the stream now famous in history, and on the heights above. Their front was about two miles long. St. Arnaud's scheme was bold and skilful. But the execution was slow, and the French were not able to effect all that their gallantry deserved. The allied armies advanced at noon. General Bosquet's division, the one closest to the sea, was protected by the British and French fleets. Next to him, on the left, was Prince Napoleon, cousin of the Emperor, and a far abler man, but not distinguished for prowess in the field. On the left of the Prince came Sir De Lacy Evans's Division, and on his left again Sir George Brown's. The Duke of Cambridge nominally commanded the Brigade of Guards. But His Royal Highness wanted experience, and the man who really led the Guards to victory that day was Sir Colin Campbell, Commander of the Highland Brigade. Sir George Cathcart, with the fourth Division, and Lord Lucan, who commanded the Cavalry, were held in reserve. The Allies were received with a heavy fire from the Russian artillery,

Battle of the Alma.

[1] The disease first broke out at Varna, where the allied armies were encamped before the sailing of the expedition.

and their advance was impeded by the flames from 1854.
the village of Bouliouk, in the enemy's centre, which the Russians deliberately fired. The Light Division, Sir George Brown's, crossed the river under great difficulties, and becoming entangled in the vineyards, were compelled to form again as they best could under a galling fire. Nevertheless, aided by General Buller, by Major Norcott of the Rifle Brigade, by General Bentinck of the Foot Guards, and above all by Sir Colin Campbell's Highlanders, they finally captured the enemy's chief redoubt, and thus decided the fate of the day. For by the personal order of Lord Raglan two guns were brought up to this position, first taken by Colonel Lacey Yea, of the Royal Fusiliers, and these guns effected the enemy's discomfiture. The final incident of the battle, which lasted about three hours, was the capture of a Russian battery by the Highland Brigade. After that the Russians retired, suffering fearful losses from the British artillery as they went, but not pursued, as they should have been, by the British cavalry. Although no more than three Russian guns were finally captured, the victory of the Alma was crushing, and ought to have been decisive. The Russians were not merely defeated. They were routed and demoralised. Their losses were enormous, and Prince Mentschikoff was so unnerved that he did not even send a despatch to his Sovereign. He rode from the field as fast as his horse would carry him. The Zouaves fought splendidly, and General Bosquet, having no Russians immediately in front of him, was able to turn the enemy's flank. But the stress of the conflict was borne by the British troops, and the effect produced upon the Russians by the Highlanders was invaluable. They were ready, said one of the Russian prisoners, to fight men, but not devils, meaning the Highland Brigade.

1854. The British losses were 362 killed and 1640 wounded.[1] The glorious news of the Alma was closely followed in England by a false report that Sebastopol had fallen. The rumour, though believed by the Turkish Ambassador in London, the editor of the *Times*, and other distinguished persons, had not the vestige of foundation in fact. But there was one excuse for it. It ought to have been true. If Lord Raglan had been in sole command of the allied forces, he would have pushed on to Sebastopol the day after the battle, and he would almost certainly have carried the town by assault. Such undoubtedly was the view of the great engineer who afterwards fortified it with such wonderful skill.[2] The Russian army was broken up, and its commander seemed to be chiefly concerned for his personal safety. Sebastopol was totally unprepared for a siege, and Lord Raglan urged an immediate advance. But St. Arnaud would not move. He pleaded that his men were tired, which was palpably untrue. As he felt his strength failing, he clung with more obstinate tenacity to his command. He knew that his successor had been already appointed, and he was determined that General Canrobert should wait. On the 23rd, instead of the 21st, the Allies advanced, and on the 26th the British occupied Balaklava. Lord Raglan, supported by that accomplished seaman Sir Edmund Lyons, had already proposed that the Star Fort, on the north of Sebastopol, should be at once attacked. If this had been done, it was the opinion of General Todleben, the best in Europe, that the fort would have been captured, that Sebastopol would have fallen,

False news of the fall of Sebastopol.

Lord Raglan's eagerness to advance.

St. Arnaud's refusal.

[1] Marshal St. Arnaud thought fit to write, and the Emperor of the French to print, an absurd and mendacious letter, in which the Marshal claimed the honours of the day for himself, and even implied that he had had the direction of the British troops.

[2] General, then Colonel, Todleben.

and that the campaign would have been brought to an end. But once more St. Arnaud objected, and his objection necessarily prevailed. The Napoleonic, miscalled the French, alliance cost England dear. It had been originally intended that Balaklava should be jointly occupied by the Allies. But the place was too small, and another arrangement had to be made. It was agreed that Lord Raglan should continue to occupy Balaklava, and that the British army should take the right side of the allied line, with the necessary liability to attack from the field army of the Russians. The French encamped on the Bays of Kamiesh and Kazatch, which were far more convenient for landing supplies. On the 29th of September Marshal St. Arnaud died on board the French ship *Berthollet*, to which he had been carried by the sailors. His successor, though not qualified for high command, was a distinguished soldier, who had seen real service in Algiers. General Canrobert, familiarly known among the English soldiers as "Bob Can't," engaged as he had been in the massacre of French citizens on the 4th of December 1851, was not in the secret counsels of the "Elysian brethren," and on the other hand he understood the business of war. He was, however, liable to be hampered by orders from the Emperor, who did not understand it in the least, while he himself, with no naval experience, had under him Admiral Hamelin, the colleague of Admiral Dundas. Lord Raglan impressed upon General Canrobert the expediency of a rapid and summary assault upon Sebastopol. But Canrobert, acting in what he believed to be the spirit of his instructions from the Tuileries, refused to incur the necessary losses, and it is only fair to add that the chief of Lord Raglan's engineering staff, Sir John Burgoyne, concurred with the French General. Accordingly the siege-trains were landed, and preparations for a regular

1854.

The British and French positions.

Death of St. Arnaud.

General Canrobert.

Sir John Burgoyne's opinion.

1854. bombardment were made. Three weeks were thus lost by the Allies, during which Todleben, and the heroic Admiral Korniloff, who perished early in the siege, threw up the works against which French and English cannon so long thundered in vain. Prince Mentschikoff took no steps to relieve Sebastopol when it was in imminent danger, and his whole conduct was such that he might with perfect justice have been shot. The three men who saved Sebastopol in the autumn of 1854 were General Todleben, General Canrobert, and the Emperor of the French.

The relief of the wounded. The accounts of the wounded in the hospitals of Scutari, to which they were taken after the Alma, excited the utmost commiseration at home. A fund was opened for their relief, fifteen thousand pounds were collected in a fortnight, and the conductors of the *Times* sent out Mr. Macdonald to distribute the money. At the same time was formed the Royal Patriotic Fund, which reached a total of a million and a quarter sterling. At the earnest request of Mr. Sidney Herbert, Secretary at War, Miss Florence Nightingale, the most famous of all nurses, with thirty-seven assistants, was despatched to Scutari. After this the condition of the wounded greatly improved. But the sufferings of the men in the trenches, when the bombardment had once begun on the 17th of October, grew more and more intense as the season advanced. The bombardment, by the advice of Sir John Burgoyne, was directed against the south side of Sebastopol. The place was not invested, and the garrison were able to keep up their communications with the interior. Even Prince Mentschikoff was at last compelled to send reinforcements, and such had been the activity of Todleben that, three weeks after the Alma, Sebastopol was tolerably well prepared for a siege. Lord Raglan earnestly desired that the fleets should

The *Times* fund. The Royal Patriotic Fund.

Miss Nightingale.

The bombardment of Sebastopol.

assist the besiegers. But, as Kinglake pithily puts it,[1] "the difficulty of founding decisive action upon piebald councils of war is even more fatal to naval enterprise than to the operations of land forces." Admiral Dundas, though he had not much belief in the feasibility of attacking Sebastopol, at once sent a favourable response to Lord Raglan's request. His captains were all for action, and they were supported by Sir Edmund Lyons, the second in command. A plan was drawn up by which the allied ships would keep moving, and would deliver their fire at the forts in succession. But at the last moment, at seven o'clock in the morning of the 17th, the French Admiral Hamelin, acting under orders from General Canrobert, insisted upon the adoption of a wholly new scheme, by which the ships would be engaged with the forts at preposterous and impossible distances. Dundas weakly yielded, and the naval attack was spoiled. Yet it would not be correct to say that even in the first part of the campaign the fleets were useless. They had protected the landing of the troops, they had removed the wounded after the Alma, and they put out of action the Russian fleet in the Black Sea. For, by sinking some of their vessels across the mouth of the harbour, the Russians at once secured and disabled their own Navy. By the time the bombardment opened, Todleben had practically completed his work, and the Western Powers had lost their final chance of taking Sebastopol by surprise. Acting under the advice of Sir John Burgoyne, but also in accordance with his own opinion, Lord Raglan had decided that the cannonade should be opened from the south, which it was rightly supposed that the enemy did not expect. They did not expect to be besieged at all. They feared to be taken by storm, and great was their delight

1854.

The failure of the naval attack.

Services rendered by the fleet.

Loss of time by the Allies.

Decision to attack from the south.

[1] *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. iii. p. 276.

1854. when the sound of the spade convinced them that for the present they were safe. Nevertheless, the

First bombardment. bombardment which opened on the morning of the 17th of October was an extremely formidable one; the French artillerymen proved too much for the Russian, and the death of Admiral Korniloff discouraged the defenders. Unluckily a shell from a Russian battery blew up a French magazine, and the effect of this accident was disproportionate to its immediate results. The French discovered

Discouragement of the French. that their batteries could be raked, and General Canrobert, falling into one of his fits of despondency, sent a message to Lord Raglan through General Rose that the French share in the bombardment must cease for the day, if not for a longer time. This was at half-past ten in the morning. The English batteries continued their fire until, of the two great Russian fortresses, the Malakhoff had been silenced, and the Redan all but destroyed. That was the moment for an assault. But the French were not in a position to co-operate, and

Lost opportunities. another opportunity was lost. As Kinglake epigrammatically says,[1] "What benumbed the Allies was the Alliance." The losses of the besieged during this bombardment were much greater than the losses of the besiegers, and the waste of ammunition in Sebastopol was immense. Yet, inasmuch as no assault followed, the energy of the attacking forces was thrown away. It is said that General Canrobert did not realise the consequences of postponing the assault. General Todleben understood them very well.

The forces defending Balaklava were isolated from the main body of the allied army. Yet

Balaklava. Balaklava was the English arsenal, the English storehouse, and the English port. Prince Mentschikoff, having received large reinforcements, pro-

[1] *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. iii. p. 477.

ceeded to attack the position on the 25th of October. The garrison was under the command of Sir Colin Campbell. Canrobert's Hill, a spur of the Causeway Heights, which separate the North from the South Valley, formed the outer defence of Balaklava. The guns on Canrobert's Hill and the Causeway Heights were manned by Turks. The Turks being outnumbered failed to defend their redoubts, which were captured by the Russians after hard fighting, and the enemy then took up their position on the Causeway Heights. The stores of Balaklava would have been at the mercy of the enemy but for the 93rd Highlanders, who, under Sir Colin Campbell, received and repelled the attack of the Russian horse with striking coolness and presence of mind. Sir Colin Campbell's Turkish battalions deserted him, and rushed in a panic to the sea. With a few hundred Highlanders, drawn up in a line only two deep, he told his men that there was no retreat, and that they must die where they stood. "Ay, ay, Sir Colin," they said, "we'll do that." But the advance guard of the Russians was driven back by the steady fire of this dauntless regiment, and the threatened attack came to nothing. Meanwhile the main body of Russian cavalry rode up the North Valley. The nature of the ground concealed their approach from the Heavy Brigade under General Scarlett, who had been sent to relieve the Turks, until the enemy suddenly appeared in dense masses on the sky-line. Scarlett's force numbered only three hundred, and their commander had never been in action before. The Russians, who were two thousand strong, could easily have overwhelmed him, but he gave them no time. He charged at once, while they hesitated, and cut his way through the enemy, who, being attacked also by the Royals and the 5th

1854.

Flight of the Turks.

Charge of the Heavy Brigade.

1854. Dragoon Guards, broke, and galloped up the hills from which they had come down. This charge uphill over difficult ground was not only one of the most gallant, but also one of the most effective, exploits in the military history of England. General Scarlett showed by his conduct on that 25th of October, the anniversary of Agincourt, that he had natural qualities which made up for the want of experience. The charge was completely successful, and some advantage might have been derived from it if the Light Brigade had now attacked the retreating enemy. But Lord Cardigan, who was in command, did nothing, and refused to let anything be done. To all solicitations he had one answer, and one answer only. He had been ordered by his superior officer, Lord Lucan,[1] who commanded the whole of the cavalry, to defend a certain position; he was occupying that position, and he must not stir. There is an almost hopeless conflict of testimony about the precise order which Lord Lucan actually gave. But if Lord Cardigan, who was afraid of nothing else, had not been afraid of responsibility, the Russian cavalry would have been destroyed. Lord Raglan, perceiving that General Scarlett's magnificent charge had reduced the Russian force to two almost isolated columns, determined at once to recapture the Causeway Heights. This task ought to have been performed by the First Division under the Duke of Cambridge and the Fourth Division under Sir George Cathcart. But Sir George, having missed his way, was late, and in the circumstances Lord Raglan thought that he should again bring his cavalry into action. He sent therefore to Lord Lucan a written order in these words: "Cavalry to advance and take advantage of any opportunity to recover the heights.

Lord Lucan and Lord Cardigan.

Lord Raglan's resolve to recover the Causeway Heights.

His written order.

[1] Lord Lucan and Lord Cardigan were brothers-in-law, and between them there was a family feud of long standing.

They will be supported by the infantry, which have been ordered to advance on two fronts." The meaning of these words is, and was, perfectly unmistakable. The cavalry were to attack with the assurance that they would be supported by infantry. Lord Lucan chose to invert the sense of his instructions, and to wait for the infantry, that he might support them. He therefore halted for about three quarters of an hour. This was precisely what Lord Raglan wished to avoid, the delay caused by the blunder of Sir George Cathcart being the reason why he appealed to the cavalry. Meanwhile it became obvious that the Russians were preparing to carry off the English guns from the Turkish redoubts, and Lord Raglan, justly incensed at Lord Lucan's flagrant disobedience, despatched another order, written with a pencil by General Airey, his quartermaster, in these terms: "Lord Raglan wishes the cavalry to advance rapidly to the front, and try to prevent the enemy carrying away the guns. Troop of horse-artillery may accompany. French cavalry is on your left. Immediate. (Signed) R. Airey." This order, though signed by General Airey, and brought by his aide-de-camp, Captain Nolan, was, of course, Lord Raglan's. The guns were of course the English guns captured from the Turks, and then crowning the Causeway Heights, which Lord Lucan ought already to have attacked. But Lord Lucan diapproved of the order, though it came straight from his Commander-in-Chief, who was posted where he could see the enemy and the guns, invisible to Lord Lucan. This Lieutenant-General at the head of his Division proceeded to argue with a mere captain upon the expediency of doing as he was told. He "urged the uselessness of such an attack and the danger attending it." Captain Nolan, as in duty bound, simply replied, "Lord Raglan's orders are

1854.

His second order through General Airey.

Lord Lucan and Captain Nolan.

1854. that the cavalry should attack immediately." "Attack, sir?" said Lord Lucan, "attack what? What guns, sir?"[1] Lord Lucan's own despatch, written two days after the battle, shows that he knew well what guns were meant. By a strange and sinister fatality, Captain Nolan's temper at this moment gave way. He was an enthusiastic believer in the power of cavalry, and he was furious at Lord Lucan's backwardness. Instead of giving, as he should have given, specific information, he threw out his hand dramatically, and exclaimed, "There, my lord, is your enemy; there are your guns!" Captain Nolan's conduct was undoubtedly disrespectful, if not insubordinate, and Lord Lucan would have been at least technically justified in putting him under arrest. That he should have honestly misinterpreted a gesture of contempt for a topical direction is almost inconceivable, especially as neither artillery nor Russians could be seen from the spot where he and Nolan were standing. In his subsequent defence, however, Lord Lucan alleged that Nolan pointed "towards the left-front corner of the valley." He therefore rode alone to Lord Cardigan, who sat mounted in front of the Light Dragoons, and told him to charge down the North Valley.

There were two points at which the Russians might have been attacked by cavalry with the probability, if not the certainty, of success. One was General Liprandi's position on the Causeway Heights, where were the guns mentioned in the order. The other was the Russian detachment opposite, on the Fedioukine Hills. "But," as Kinglake says,[2] "between the two ranges, thus each of them inviting attack, there unhappily lay a smooth valley, which offered itself to those horse-

[1] Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. iv. p. 240.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 235.

men who might either be weary of life or compelled by a sense of duty to go down and commit self-destruction." The latter was the motive of Lord Cardigan, and of the Light Brigade, the immortal Six Hundred. Lord Cardigan, on receiving the order to advance by word of mouth from Lord Lucan, replied, "Certainly, sir; but allow me to point out to you that the Russians have a battery in the valley in our front, and batteries and riflemen on each flank." This was the literal truth, and it is difficult to understand how any one not temporarily insane can have given such a command. Lord Lucan simply remarked, "I cannot help that; it is Lord Raglan's positive orders that the Light Brigade attacks immediately." Lord Cardigan then turned round, and said, "The Brigade will advance." [1] Those six hundred officers and men, with Lord Cardigan at their head, rode between two Russian batteries up to the mouth of a third. They rode to almost certain death.[2] There was no conceivable object in the order, and the rawest recruit must have felt that it was a blunder. Yet not one of them hesitated for an instant. They followed their chief, who escaped without a serious wound, and they actually galloped past the Russian guns at the end of the valley, driving the Russian gunners before them. After the charge had begun, Captain Nolan was seen riding across the Brigade, gesticulating violently, and pointing to the Causeway Heights. It is reasonably supposed that he was trying to save the Brigade from destruction, and to indicate the true way. But before he could make Lord Cardigan hear or

1854.

Lord Cardigan's remonstrance.

The charge of the Light Brigade.

[1] Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. iv. p. 249.

[2] The French soldiers of Bosquet's divisions were so horrified at the spectacle of this purposeless sacrifice that they shouted, as if they could be heard, "Stop, stop, it is mad" (Arrêtez-vous, arrêtez-vous, c'est insensé). — De la Gorce, *Histoire du Second Empire*, vol. i. p. 294.

1854. understand, he was struck by the fragment of a Russian shell, and fell dead from his horse. That General Liprandi believed the attack to be meant, as meant it was, for the Causeway Heights, is plain from the fact that he withdrew some of his battalions, and abandoned several of the guns taken from the Turks. When at length the enemy discovered the truth, they imagined that these desperate horsemen must be drunk, and were astonished to find from the few prisoners they took that the men had not even breakfasted. At the close of this memorable charge the strength of the Light Brigade had been reduced from six hundred to two hundred men. Lord Cardigan himself, having performed a feat of unsurpassed daring, conceived that his duty had been discharged, and rode slowly back without waiting for his supports, or attempting to rally his brigade. He was first in, and first out. That the Light Brigade were not wiped from existence is due to General Morris, the commander of the French cavalry, and to General d'Allonville, who, with the *Chasseurs d'Afrique*, drove the enemy from the Fedioukine Hills. This was one of the most brilliant movements in the whole war, and the timely adroitness which planned it was not less conspicuous than the intrepidity with which it was carried out. Lord Lucan gave no help. "They have sacrificed," he said, "the Light Brigade; they shall not the Heavy, if I can help it." The unconsciousness of his own part in the sacrifice was almost sublime. General Bosquet's epigrammatic comment upon the charge of the Light Brigade is even better known than Tennyson's poem, having become part of that colloquialism which is cosmopolitan. "It was magnificent," said the gallant Frenchman, "but it was not war." Unlike most epigrams, this is exhaustive. A few supplementary words, however, remain to be added.

When Lord Cardigan approached Lord Raglan to make his report of the action, Lord Raglan addressed him with strong and natural displeasure. "What did you mean, sir," he asked, "by attacking a battery in front, contrary to all the usages of warfare and the customs of the service?" But Lord Cardigan's reply was conclusive. "My lord, I hope you will not blame me, for I received the order to attack from my superior officer in front of the troops." Lord Raglan accepted this excuse, and said afterwards to Lord Lucan, "You have lost the Light Brigade."[1] This severe sentence was justified by the facts, and subsequent investigation has confirmed the opinion of Lord Raglan that Lord Lucan was responsible for the sacrifice of the Six Hundred. For his share in the catastrophe, and for the hostile attitude which he afterwards adopted towards Lord Raglan, Lord Lucan was recalled by the Commander-in-Chief, with the Secretary of State's approval.[2] Lord Cardigan was allowed to return home on account of his health, and became, as in some respects he well deserved to be, a popular hero. But he wasted the rest of his life in controversy, and even litigation, about his conduct of the battle. Lord Lucan took advantage of his status as a peer to assail his absent superior in the House of Lords, by which he did no good to himself and no harm to Lord Raglan. 1854.

At the moment the charges of both the Heavy and Light Brigades seemed to be without substantial results. After the latter General Liprandi reversed the retreat he had begun, and reoccupied

[1] Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. iv. p. 363.

[2] He asked to be brought before a court-martial, but Lord Hardinge refused his request. It appears to be a popular error that an officer recalled by superior authority for misconduct can demand a public trial. No such right exists either under the Army Act or under the King's Regulations. The only appeal is to the Secretary of State, and it is doubtful whether even that existed in 1854.

1854. the Causeway Heights. Lord Raglan, having consulted General Canrobert, agreed that no further attempt to dislodge this Russian force should be made. The moral effect of these exploits was undoubtedly great. In the language of the cricket-field they "established a funk," and the Russians came to regard a force of British cavalry, though it were only a small one, as something more than human. But, on the other hand, the neglect of the Allies to disturb Liprandi was an encouragement of the enemy, and the consequent abandonment of the Woronzow Road, by which supplies could have been brought, was the cause of intense suffering to the British Army during the winter.

Moral effect of the charges.

The battle of Balaklava was hailed in Sebastopol as a triumph, and the Russian army was continuously reinforced, until at dawn of day on the 5th of November a determined attempt was made, by Prince Mentschikoff's directions, to drive the Allies from the trenches, and raise the siege of Sebastopol. Two of the Emperor's sons, the Grand Dukes Michael and Nicholas, took part in this engagement, known to all the world as the battle of Inkerman. Inkerman has been called the soldiers' battle, because the tactics on both sides were completely disarranged by events, and the fortune of the day was determined by a series of desperate, isolated combats. The British were completely taken by surprise, for the heavy mist in the darkness of the morning shrouded the grey coats of the Russians from view. So dark it was that great masses of the enemy crept unnoticed to the outposts of the Second Division. Almost the whole of Lord Raglan's force was engaged on this momentous morning. The Brigade of Guards, commanded by the Duke of Cambridge, took a leading part in the affray, and the Coldstreams lost a third of their effective strength. The Guards

The battle of Inkerman.

were hard pressed, and would have been over- 1854.
powered but for the prompt aid of General Bosquet, whose timely reinforcements decided the day. The victory of Inkerman, gained, like Waterloo, upon a Sunday, was a desperate struggle for three hours, much of it at the point of the bayonet, in which officers and men of all ranks alike distinguished themselves. If the battle had been won by the Russians, the Allies would have been forced to leave the Crimea, and the siege of Sebastopol would have been raised. On the other hand, the Russian defeat might have been turned into a rout, and Sebastopol might possibly have fallen, if the retiring forces of Prince Gortschakoff had been pursued. Lord Raglan desired to pursue them, but nothing would induce General Canrobert to join in the enterprise, and it was therefore abandoned. Canrobert was utterly unfit for the position, as St. Arnaud had been before him. Though personally indifferent to danger, he had no moral courage. He lost his nerve on critical occasions, and would not sacrifice his men even for the most obvious purposes of war.[1] A fiercer fight than Inkerman has seldom been fought. The number of Russians engaged in it was about forty thousand. Against them were eight thousand British troops and six thousand French. More than once the British had to retire before overwhelming force. But they always returned, and it was the Minié rifle at last, after many charges with the bayonet, which made the Russians finally retreat. It was a

[1] There can be no doubt that after this terrible battle the Russians were guilty of killing wounded soldiers incapable of resistance. "Killing the wounded" is a misleading, or at least an incomplete, phrase. A wounded man may properly be despatched if he has a revolver and is about to use it. On this occasion the Russians violated the rules of civilised warfare by slaughtering men who were not merely wounded, but unarmed. Many of them expected similar treatment themselves, and were surprised to be spared. They were an only half-civilised army.

1854. magnificent victory, and there are few of which England has more reason to be proud. It was won, however, at a fearful cost, and it did not bring the Allies one step nearer to the seizure or destruction of Sebastopol. "I never before," wrote Lord Raglan, "witnessed such a spectacle as the field presented; but upon this I will not dwell."[1] Among the officers killed was Lieutenant-General Sir George Cathcart, in command of the Fourth Division, who had come straight to the Crimea from South Africa after finishing the Kaffir War. The British losses at Inkerman were 2612, of whom 145 were officers. The French were 1726. About five thousand Russians were put out of action. No Russian guns were taken, and the work of the besiegers was resumed as before. The Allies were not in a position to assault, and the Russians were in no humour for renewing the offensive. The Queen expressed her grateful sense of her soldiers' services by instituting the Crimean Medal with clasps for Alma and Inkerman. Lord Raglan, who had been himself in the thick of the battle through the greater part of the eight hours for which it lasted, was gazetted a Field-Marshal. But the popular hero of Inkerman was Sir Thomas Troubridge, who lost both his feet, and, like Widdrington, fought upon the stumps.

The Crimean Medal.

Nine days after Inkerman the Allies were visited by a calamity more disastrous in its consequences than many a military defeat, the great hurricane of the 14th of November. Before that date the British soldiers in the Crimea were constantly supplied with abundant food. This is distinctly stated by the special correspondent of the *Times*, Mr. Russell, afterwards Sir William Russell, an unsparing and invaluable critic of the

The great gale.

[1] Lord Raglan to the Duke of Newcastle, 8th November 1854.

War Office and the General Staff.[1] The provisions were brought up from Balaklava. But they were stored in transports, and these transports were anchored outside the harbour. At daylight on the 14th the storm broke, and swept away the tents of the Allies as if they had been so many heaps of dry leaves. Torrents of rain filled the trenches, and turned the earth into mud. The rain was followed by driving snow. But, galling as was the discomfort caused by the tempest to those on land, its effects at sea were infinitely worse. Captain Cargill, of the *City of London*, saved his ship by boldly taking her out to sea. Many vessels were dashed to pieces against the cliffs of Balaklava, and among them the *Prince*, the largest transport then afloat. A hundred and fifty men went down with her, but they were by no means all who perished in consequence of her loss. For her cargo was worth half a million sterling, and it consisted entirely of supplies for the troops. Before the gale subsided, stores to the value of two millions had been destroyed, the damage being pretty equally distributed between English and French. The Russians also suffered, and suffered severely. But the hardships and privations endured by British soldiers in the Crimea during the winter of 1854 and 1855 began with this awful storm. The cold, though not unusual for Russia, was bitterly felt by Englishmen. The tents no longer kept out the rain. Tea, coffee, and sugar frequently failed. Since the loss of the Woronzow Road, there was only a cart track from Balaklava, and this was made impassable by mud. There was no hay for the horses. There were no men available to make a fresh road for the purposes of the commissariat, and scarcity was followed by cholera. The military hospitals were overcrowded, and the effective

1854.

Sufferings of the troops.

[1] See the Collection of his *Letters on the War*, p. 263.

1854. strength of Lord Raglan's army did not in the month of November exceed thirteen thousand men. The siege was practically suspended. Green coffee and salt pork produced their natural result in the shape of scurvy. The mismanagement was almost incredible. Stacks of vegetables decayed on the beach at Balaklava, and bales of clothing were left to rot undisturbed, while the men serving the trenches went in rags, had no change of raiment, and were covered with vermin. These facts were disclosed by the Press, and especially by the *Times*. There was no regular censorship in the Crimea, at least so far as the English newspapers were concerned, and when Mr. Russell's letters appeared, the indignation of the public was extreme. They could follow the course of the siege from week to week, and week by week their anger grew in strength. It did not spare Lord Raglan. But the full force of it descended upon the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Aberdeen.

The Crimean Generals. Lord Raglan, though inactive, stuck to his post. The other General Officers were not all available. Sir George Brown, in command of the Light Division, had been seriously wounded at Inkerman, and was laid up on board the *Agamemnon*. The Duke of Cambridge, to whom had been assigned the Brigade of Guards, was on the *Retribution*, and unwell. His Royal Highness had left the front immediately after Inkerman, and did not return. Sir De Lacy Evans, commander of the Second Division, was on his way home invalided. He received the thanks of Parliament, and resumed his attendance in the House of Commons as Member for Westminster. But his military reputation was somewhat dimmed by the discovery that he had recommended to Sir Edmund Lyons the withdrawal of the troops from the Crimea. Only the third Division, Sir Richard England's, retained its original

chief. Lord Cardigan was ill on his yacht, where he had slept throughout the campaign by the leave of Lord Raglan. Nothing could be worse than the prospects of the Allies, and there arose a cry that efficiency was being sacrificed to "Peninsular prejudices." Lord Raglan, though an excellent, was an old-fashioned soldier, and not accustomed either to authority or to responsibility. When fighting had once begun, he inspired confidence by his energy and his contempt for danger. But his intellect was not fertile, he had no plans, and his deficiencies were not supplied by General Canrobert, a much younger man, yet a routineer. 1854. Lord Raglan's defects.

While things were in this state, the Cabinet was on the point of disruption. Lord John Russell, conceiving that he was not treated with sufficient respect by the Prime Minister, and ardently desiring to be Prime Minister himself, began once more to threaten that he would resign. He wished also to remove the Duke of Newcastle from the War Office, to put Lord Palmerston in his place, and to abolish the post of Secretary at War, then held by Mr. Sidney Herbert. Lord Aberdeen, however, was on this occasion firm. He would not sacrifice a loyal to a disloyal colleague, and he declined to admit that the Secretary for War must necessarily be in the House of Commons. Lord Palmerston put an end to the dispute by declaring that he saw no ground for superseding the Duke. Lord Palmerston's ambition was not indeed satisfied by the Home Office. He was as much bent on the Premiership as Lord John. But he was quite shrewd enough to see that when Parliament met, the Secretary of State for War would be the scapegoat, and that was a position he did not covet. Division in the Cabinet.

Parliament met on the 12th of December in a gloomy and dissatisfied mood. The Queen's Speech

1854.

The winter session.

held out some hopes of an alliance with Austria. But Austria had not the slightest intention of departing from her attitude of neutrality. Francis Joseph, the modern Pharaoh, was like a reed, upon which if a man lean, it shall go into his hand and pierce it. Lord Clarendon could not, or would not, see that the Central Powers were determined to suck what advantage they could from the sacrifices of the Western without making any sacrifice themselves. Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli were, as they had a right to be, rather critical than suggestive. They dwelt upon the tardiness of the military preparations, and upon the failure of the Baltic fleet. This country has never been prepared for war. The insurance, as Sir Robert Peel said, would be too heavy. The real charge against the Government of Lord Aberdeen is not that they were unprepared for war, but that after war had been declared they neglected to provide for a winter campaign. They assumed that Sebastopol would be taken by surprise, and the failure of the assumption was very near leading to the failure of the siege. The Duke of Newcastle defended himself to the House of Lords at great length and in much detail. But he made no impression upon the public, which had already condemned him unheard. He justly protested against the cruel charge of indifference. Two of his sons were at the war, and he himself had not taken a day's holiday since the commencement of hostilities. Men in high places, however, must submit to be judged by results. The Duke had proved before, and proved afterwards, a respectable Minister in quiet times. He was unequal to a great and terrible emergency, where his slow mind had not room to turn. It is the more creditable in Lord Aberdeen to have stood by him, because he had never been of Lord Aberdeen's party in the Cabinet. He was now able to promise

The Duke of Newcastle.

that by the end of the year, or within three weeks, there would be fifty-three thousand British soldiers in the Crimea. That did not satisfy the country. Nor did the Foreign Enlistment Bill introduced by Lord John Russell on the 19th of December. This singularly ill advised measure was denounced from both sides of the House. Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, a master of Parliamentary eloquence, declaimed against it, and Mr. Cobden bluntly asked whether British honour was to be upheld by "cut-throats taken from the back slums of Germany." The one plea for the Bill was its alleged necessity, and the allegation was a pitiful acknowledgment of weakness to make in the face of the world. The third reading gave Mr. Bright another opportunity of speaking out against a war waged "for a hopeless cause and a worthless ally" by "an incompetent and guilty Ministry." If Mr. Bright meant that the military situation was hopeless, he was of course wrong. But if he was looking to the future, he was right, as any one can see by comparing the extent of the Turkish Empire in Europe half a century ago with its dimensions now. And as for the "worthless ally," by which he meant Turkey, not France, neither his eloquence nor Cobden's could adequately describe the atrocities which the Crimean War enabled successive Sultans to perpetrate. The Bill passed, and a considerable number of Germans were enlisted under it. Better and more loyal soldiers were obtained in Canada, where the Hundredth, sometimes called the Canadian, Regiment was recruited. In this respect Canada then stood alone among British colonies. The bearing-rein had been too lately taken off, and the memories of transportation were too recent, for colonial patriotism to be effusive in its character.

1854.

The Foreign Enlistment Bill.

The Canadian Regiment.

Before the close of the year 1854, Vice-Admiral Dundas was recalled, and was succeeded in the

1854. command of the Black Sea fleet by Rear-Admiral Sir Edmund Lyons. Admiral Dundas had been severely criticised for not attacking Sebastopol by sea, and Sir Edmund Lyons was contrasted with him as the type of a dashing seaman. Events vindicated Dundas. For Sir Edmund followed the prudent example of his predecessor. Wooden ships could not safely attack stone walls, and the Russian fleet was secure, though useless, in an inaccessible harbour.

Recall of Vice-Admiral Dundas.

Punch, which at that time habitually depicted Lord Aberdeen as one of the criminal classes, represented him at Christmas 1854 as "remanded till next sessions." The gibe, though brutal, was prophetic. Lord John Russell was on the look-out for a cause of resignation, and in the middle of the "Crimean winter" he found one. He could hardly have made a worse choice. When the House of Commons reassembled after the Christmas holidays, Mr. Roebuck, the Radical Member for Sheffield, gave notice that he would move for a Committee of Inquiry into the conduct of the war. Lord John at once wrote to Lord Aberdeen, and said that, as he could not oppose the motion, he must resign his office. It is difficult to understand how a responsible Minister of the Crown, who had filled the highest position in the State, could have brought himself to believe that such a step was consistent either with public duty or with personal honour. Being a Member of the Cabinet, he was as fully responsible for the policy of the Government as any one of his colleagues. Some of his suggestions, such as the creation of a Secretary for War, had been adopted, though others, such as the removal of a Peelite to make room for a Whig, had been rejected. In order that he might have two thousand a year without heavy departmental work, one Minister had been officially

The fall of the Government.

1855. Jan. 23. Roebuck's notice.

Resignation of Lord John.

degraded, and another Minister had been actually dismissed. It was not until the existence of the Government had been imperilled that he left his colleagues in the lurch, and, in the memorable words of Mr. Gladstone, "to escape punishment, ran away from duty."[1] That some such motion would be made had long been known, and no additional importance was given to it by the personality of the mover. Mr. Roebuck was a very clever man, and he had that irresponsible recklessness of consequence which is called fearlessness by its admirers. But, in the common phrase, he carried no weight. Nobody was disposed to believe a thing merely because Mr. Roebuck said it. The defection of Lord John, on the other hand, was almost inevitably fatal to the Government of which he had been a member for more than two years. Well might Lord Palmerston complain of such behaviour as embarrassing. It was crippling. It furnished the Opposition with unanswerable arguments. "Here," they could say, "is the second man in your Cabinet, in his own estimation the first, knowing all that you know, and he says that an inquiry by this House is essential. How, then, can you deny or dispute it?" One man, who always had the courage of his opinions, did dispute it, and did deny it. Mr. Gladstone boldly said, and carried Lord Palmerston with him in saying, that the course proposed was unconstitutional, because it transferred responsibility from the advisers of the Crown to a Parliamentary Committee. But this

1855.

Gladstone's speech.

[1] Lord John offered to withdraw his resignation if the Duke of Newcastle would retire in favour of Lord Palmerston. It had been settled before Christmas between Lord Aberdeen and the Duke that this change should be made. But no one else was aware of the arrangement, and Lord Aberdeen, though he had assented to it, declined to carry it out as the result of a bargain with Lord John. — Lord Stanmore's *Life of Lord Aberdeen*, p. 283.

1855. reasoning is surely fallacious. The Committee was not to carry on the war. It was to ascertain how the war had been carried on. If it involved a want of confidence in Her Majesty's Ministers, that was because they chose to give it that character by putting up Lord Palmerston and Mr. Gladstone to oppose it. The debate was enlivened by the unseemly spectacle of Mr. Bernal Osborne, Secretary of the Admiralty, attacking the War Office from the Treasury Bench. A better figure was made by his predecessor, Mr. Augustus Stafford,[1] who had redeemed his character by his services to the wounded in the Crimea, and could describe at first hand the miseries they suffered. Mr. Roebuck himself was too ill to say more than a few words. He might have moved his resolution by taking off his hat. The result would have been the same. "Dismiss your Government," said Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, "and save your army." Rhetoric, no doubt, but rhetoric which admirably expressed the feeling of Sir Edward's audience. When the House divided on the 29th of January, Mr. Roebuck informed the Speaker that the Ayes to the right were 305, the Noes to the left 148. The second Government of All the Talents had been defeated by the overwhelming majority of 157. The victors were so astonished that they forgot to cheer, and, despite the gravity of the occasion, it was to the sound of derisive laughter that the tellers returned to their seats.

[1] Formerly Stafford O'Brien. A Parliamentary Committee had severely censured his administration of naval patronage, with the Duke of Northumberland's connivance, in the Government of Lord Derby.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SECOND PART OF THE RUSSIAN WAR

THUS fell the British Aristides, of whose inconvenient rectitude and unseasonable virtue an impatient generation was weary. No one who knew anything of Lord Aberdeen ever attributed to him a motive that was not the highest. He was a good man, in the best sense of the term, and, like most good men, he was a bad actor. His inflexible justice stood in his way. He did not believe in Russian perfidy, in Turkish honour, or in the sincerity of Louis Napoleon, and he could not conceal his unbelief merely because his country was at war. Therefore he incurred the reproach of treachery, though a more disinterested and high-minded patriot never breathed. To the end of his life he could not forgive himself his share in the responsibility for the defence of Turkey. He was his own severest critic, and his son tells a touching story in illustration of his repentance. A munificent builder of kirks, manses, and schools, he declined, without giving any reason, to restore his own parish church of Methlick. After his death in 1860 there was found among his papers, written several times, the verse from the First Book of the Chronicles in which David explains to Solomon that he cannot himself build the house of the Lord, because he has made war and shed blood.[1] The

1855.

Lord Aberdeen's merits and defects.

His remorse.

[1] Lord Stanmore's *Life of Lord Aberdeen*, pp. 302, 303.

1855.

Gladstone's eulogy.

panegyric of Mr. Gladstone best describes the real character of Lord Aberdeen. "It is no reproach to other statesmen of this or of other periods to say that scarcely any of them have had a celebrity so entirely unaided by a transitory glare. But if this be so, it implies that while they for the most part must relatively lose, he must relatively and greatly gain. If they have had stage lights, and he has had none, it is the hour when those lights are extinguished that will for the first time do that justice between them which he was too noble, too far aloft in the tone of his mind, to desire to anticipate. All the qualities and parts in which he was great were those that are the very foundation-stones of our being; as foundation-stones they are deep, and as being deep, they are withdrawn from view; but time is their witness and their friend, and in the final distribution of posthumous fame Lord Aberdeen has nothing to forfeit, he has only to receive."[1] Gladstone's words are a monument more durable than brass, and their beauty is only equalled by their truth.

The gravity of the crisis.

The defeat and resignation of Lord Aberdeen's Government seriously embarrassed the Queen. Her own sympathies were with the fallen Minister, but those she had, of course, to put aside. The question was for whom she should send. The fatal vote had been instigated by an independent Radical, not by a member of the regular Opposition. Her Majesty could not well send for Mr. Roebuck. She examined the list of the majority, found that most of them were supporters of Lord Derby, and sent for him. By the unwritten law and established practice of the Constitution Lord Derby was bound to take office. He had had a legitimate opportunity for making his choice, but that moment had passed. The Opposition in the

Lord Derby's summons.

His responsibility.

[1] Lord Stanmore's *Life of Lord Aberdeen*, p. 309.

House of Commons, and Mr. Disraeli as their leader, might have refused to support Mr. Roebuck. They might have said that, though blunders had been committed, and a case for inquiry shown, they were not prepared to turn out the Government in the middle of a great war. They did not adopt that course. On the contrary, they deliberately, and with a full knowledge of the consequences, destroyed the Administration of Lord Aberdeen. They professed to be enthusiastically in favour of the war, and they were bound by patriotic duty to carry it on without a moment's delay. But they had the misfortune to be led by a man whose brilliant gifts and conspicuous accomplishments were marred by infirmity of purpose and vacillation of mind. Lord Derby did not at once decline the task entrusted to him. He entered into negotiations with the other side. He made overtures to Lord Palmerston, offering also seats in the Cabinet to Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Sidney Herbert. These proposals were not unnaturally declined, and thereupon Lord Derby gave up the attempt. The speech in which he explained to the House of Lords his reasons for refusal was even more amazing than the similar statement he had made in 1851. The gist of it was that he could not form a respectable Government from the ranks of his own followers. Mr. Disraeli, he mentioned, would have waived his own claim, and allowed Lord Palmerston to lead the House of Commons. Lord Ellenborough would have been Secretary for War, and Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton would have been a member of the Cabinet. But these two additions to his former colleagues were in his view inadequate, and so he surrendered his task. The effect of this naked candour upon Lord Derby's own party was disastrous. In 1851 the men distrusted were also untried. They were

1855.

His refusal.

Feb. 5.

1855. tried in 1852, and, in the opinion of their chief, they had been found wanting. It is true that since that date the Duke of Northumberland, then First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Stafford, then Secretary of the Admiralty, and Major Beresford, then Secretary at War, had been severely censured by Committees of the House of Commons. But they did not belong to the class of necessary men, if such a class exists. "Lord Derby's refusal to undertake the Government," says Lord Malmesbury in his diary for the 6th of February 1855, "has been a great disappointment and great offence to his party." "Disraeli," he adds three days later, "is in a state of disgust beyond all control; he told me he had spoken his mind to Lord Derby, and told him some very disagreeable truths." Lord Malmesbury sets it down to the gout, which was Chatham's best help in time of need. On the next page, however,[1] he puts into Lord Derby's mouth an opinion that if he waited until Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston had failed, he would be "a most powerful Minister." If that were his calculation, its failure was glaring indeed. A powerful Minister Lord Derby never became, and never deserved to become. Such an exhibition of pusillanimity as that which justly excited Mr. Disraeli's contempt is happily rare in the politics of England.

Lord John's failure. After going through the usual but empty form of applying to Lord Lansdowne, the Queen sent for Lord John Russell, who seriously and characteristically thought that he could form an Administration. He was very soon, and most disagreeably, undeceived. There is honour among politicians. The standard may not be a very high one, but it must be observed. They expect each other to play the game. Lord John had been much disappointed to

[1] *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, vol. ii. p. 8.

find that not one of his Whig colleagues joined him in deserting Lord Aberdeen. Neither would they join him now. Lord Palmerston, indeed, gave a sort of conditional acceptance, knowing very well that nothing could come of it. With that solitary exception, if exception it can be called, not one of Lord Aberdeen's associates would have anything to do with the man who had supplanted him. The Duke of Argyll declined Lord John's invitation to call. Lord Lansdowne expressed polite regret. Sir George Grey, a model of propriety, accompanied his regret with disapproval. Lord Clarendon refused to give any answer "until he had consulted the Head of the Government of which he was a member." Such language from a typical Whig must have opened Lord John's eyes to the enormity of the offence he had committed. He speedily withdrew, and Palmerston, "the man of the people," became also the Minister of the Crown. 1855. Palmerston Prime Minister. Feb. 6.

Her Majesty would have been more, or less, than human if she had sent without reluctance for the man whom she had dismissed from the Foreign Office three years before. But she was a thoroughly constitutional monarch, and Palmerston spared much embarrassment to her, as well as to others, by never showing any himself. He was now in his seventy-first year, and, except by the rule of the almanac, as young as ever. To indomitable energy he added a robust conviction that the war was righteous, and an imperturbable assurance that it would be brought to a successful issue by the Allies. The perjured President of a throttled Republic, whom he had been the first to congratulate on the success of his crimes, was now the Emperor of the French, united by treaty with the Queen of England. Lord Palmerston might well triumph, but he knew how to triumph with decency. He had not many places

1855.

Retirement of the Duke of Newcastle.

to fill. The Duke of Newcastle, making a virtue of necessity, retired with his chief, and used his leisure to visit the Crimea, from which he sent home the gloomiest predictions of disaster. The Secretaryship of State for War was at that moment the most conspicuous post in the British Empire, and the best man available should have been selected to fill it. Palmerston chose Lord Panmure, a Whig placeman of the second or third rate, swathed in red tape, and wedded to routine. The Prime Minister's own position at the Home Office was taken by Sir George Grey. Mr. Herbert became Secretary for the Colonies, and the office of Secretary at War was abolished. The Peelite members of the old Cabinet, from loyalty to their leader, were at first inclined to hold aloof. But at the urgent request of Lord Aberdeen himself they consented to remain. It is curious that Lord Aberdeen, who had been for the first half of his life a staunch Tory, was in his old age so anxious for the future of the Liberal party that he urged Mr. Gladstone not to identify himself with Conservative principles. Although a Liberal Government, in the modern sense of the term, can hardly be said to have existed before 1859, it was in 1855 that the term first began to be habitually employed. Lord Palmerston himself had no dislike to it, especially as it was connected with the liberation of Italy, which he desired with an ardour that may almost be called sentimental.

His successor.

The adhesion of Italy to the Allies.

Italy might seem to have little concern with the Crimean War. But at the end of January 1855, when the ministerial crisis in England was at its height, the King of Sardinia joined the Alliance, and agreed to furnish fifteen thousand men, commanded by a distinguished officer, General La Marmora, in consideration of a British loan for one million sterling. Nothing could have been more welcome to

England and France, who were sorely pressed for men, than this little force of hardy mountaineers from Piedmont. But no such project would have occurred to the simple soul of the gallant King Victor Emmanuel. It was the master stroke of a master mind, to whose matchless dexterity, sleepless vigilance, and long-sighted wisdom Italy owes her rescue from the servitude of ages. The morality of the Sardinian expedition may be doubted, for Italy had no quarrel with Russia. But Count Cavour's love of his country was a consuming passion. Where she was concerned he had no other morals and no other faith. He saw his opportunity and he seized it. Three English statesmen — Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, and Mr. Gladstone — were in sympathy with the movement for Italian unity. Cavour perceived that Austria, his most deadly enemy, had offended the Western Powers by standing aloof from the war. He calculated that if Italy, or Piedmont as representing Italy, stepped in where Austria feared to tread, her apparent folly would be the truest wisdom in the long run. 1855.

The war, however, was very nearly brought to an end before General La Marmora's regiments could be actively engaged. Lord Palmerston had come in to conquer Russia. He began by negotiating with her. The opportunity was not far to seek. For the sake of conciliating Austria, whose active intervention would have been disastrous to the Russian cause, Nicholas had always kept up an appearance of willingness to negotiate, which took definite shape during the month of November. In the last days of 1854, when the fortunes of the Allies were at their very lowest ebb, the representatives of the four Powers met Prince Alexander Gortschakoff at Vienna, and drew up Four Points upon which agreement might lead to The Vienna Conference.

1855. peace. Lord John Russell had refused to take
Lord John's mission, Feb. 12. office under Lord Palmerston; but he accepted a special mission to act as British Plenipotentiary at the Conference of Vienna with the regular Ambassador, Lord Westmorland.

The Four Points. The first point was the transference from Russia to Europe of the Protectorate over Moldavia, Wallachia, and Servia. The second was the free navigation of the Danube. The third was the termination of the Russian preponderance in the Black Sea. The fourth was the establishment of a European Protectorate over the Christian population of Turkey, and was, of course, entirely inconsistent with the independence of the Ottoman Empire. But in this war for Turkey, Turkey was never consulted. The first, second, and fourth of these points gave no trouble. Bitter controversy, on the other hand, raged over the third, which dealt with the distribution of naval power.

Lord Palmerston was in many respects a bold, and in some respects a reckless, Minister. But there was one thing of which he was afraid, and that was the House of Commons. On the 16th of February he told the House distinctly that he could not assent to the appointment of Mr. Roebuck's Committee. This decision was in strict accord with
The Roebuck Committee. the arguments he had himself used in debate, which had also been used by Mr. Gladstone. Quoting Richard the Second's speech to the men of Kent, "I will be your leader," he added that the Government would themselves inquire, and that Royal Commissioners would forthwith visit the Crimea to examine the state of the hospitals, the barracks, and the ships. Mr. Disraeli insisted that the House should adhere to its resolution. He had certainly a very strong case, and it became evident that the House was with him. But at this time Palmerston held the House of Commons in the hollow of his hand. He

was the only possible Minister. All other combinations had failed, and to withhold from him the necessary support for carrying on the Government would have amounted to a refusal of supplies in the middle of a war. Lord Palmerston, nevertheless, gave way, and assented to the appointment of the Committee. Thereupon Sir James Graham, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Herbert resigned. Their resignation was the subject of much criticism, just and unjust. To say, as Lord Malmesbury says, that their conduct was a thousand times worse than Lord John's is absurd. They agreed with Lord Palmerston in regarding the Committee as unconstitutional, and they accepted office on the understanding that it would not be appointed. They may have been wrong. But if so, Palmerston was wrong too, and it was he who changed his mind, not they. Yet it may well be doubted whether they would not have acted a more patriotic part if they had declined, even at the cost of their own consistency, to risk the disruption of the Cabinet at so supremely critical a moment. How keenly Lord Palmerston felt their loss may be gathered from the fact that he wrote to Lord John Russell, then at Paris, on his way to Vienna, and offered him the Colonial Secretaryship without suggesting his return. Lord John's prompt acceptance of the offer caused general surprise. For he thus became a subordinate member of Lord Palmerston's Government without even leading the House of Commons. His absence from England was not so serious a drawback as it seemed, because any Secretary of State can constitutionally perform the functions of any other. Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, at first took charge of Colonial affairs. But Lord Palmerston was at that time so full of zeal that he could not see a vacant department without wishing to have the control of it. Under pretence of concern for the health of Sir

1855.

Palmerston's surrender.

Resignation of the Peelites.

Lord John's acceptance of office.

1855. George, a much younger man than himself, he soon added Lord John's work to his own, even though, not being a Secretary of State, he could not formally sign despatches. Mr. Gladstone was succeeded as Chancellor of the Exchequer by Sir George Cornewall Lewis, the most learned and accomplished of public men, who may be said to have known everything except finance. Sir Charles Wood became First Lord of the Admiralty in place of Sir James Graham; and Mr. Vernon Smith, Sydney Smith's nephew, afterwards Lord Lyveden, was made President of the Board of Control. Even the Peelites who were not in the Cabinet accompanied their friends into retirement. Mr. Cardwell gave up the Board of Trade, and Lord St. Germans the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland. Every member of the Government except Sir William Molesworth was now a Whig. But by tacit consent that insular term was dropped for the European name of Liberal, which played so vital a part in the subsequent history of England. The statements of the seceding Ministers in the House of Commons on the 23rd of February 1855 led to a debate famous in political annals for the most eloquent of all the eloquent speeches delivered by John Bright. It was not an argument, but a direct and a most moving appeal to the hearts and consciences of the English people. He referred to victims of the war, gallant soldiers who had sat in the House; and in a passage of solemn, pathetic beauty he exclaimed, "The angel of death is abroad in the land, you may almost hear the beating of his wings!" It was magnificent, but it was not politics, for it might have been delivered at almost any stage of almost any campaign.

The name of Liberal.

Bright's appeal for peace.

The reconstruction of the Government was almost immediately followed by the appointment of Mr. Roebuck's Committee. Mr. Roebuck him-

self was Chairman, and no Minister was included in it. Lord Aberdeen and the Duke of Newcastle were heard as witnesses. A grotesque proposal made by the Chairman that the Committee should be secret was contemptuously rejected by the House, and the evidence was published from day to day till the 15th of May, when the inquiry was closed. The arrangements for the comfort of the wounded were shown to have been lamentably deficient. "There is no matter whatever," says Sir John Burgoyne, who was on the spot, "in which the French are so superior to us as in their hospitals. They spare no pains and no expense to give the sick the best of houses, excellent beds, ventilation and extreme cleanliness, and every attendance, care, and comfort possible."[1] The scandals of the Crimean winter are known to all the world. It is not perhaps equally notorious that when Lord Palmerston became Head of the Government, he at once set himself to the task of applying adequate remedies, and that his success was complete. Upon this point there can be no better authority than a cultivated and enlightened Frenchman who has not much affection for this country. "At the end of a few months," says M. Pierre de la Gorce, "the English army in the Crimea astonished men by the abundance of its wealth as much as it had formerly amazed them by its poverty. It had everything that money and industry could give — fine men, fine horses, which actually excited envy; fine waggons, fine materials, comfortable barracks, ambulances which were almost luxurious, and above all, victuals in profusion. It was, in short, so well organised for the struggle that later, when peace came, there were some feelings of regret." Here M. de la Gorce may be suspected of irony. "One might have said," he adds, "that it was a sacrifice to leave

1855. Appointment of the Committee.

Palmerston's activity.

[1] *Life and Correspondence of Sir John Burgoyne*, vol. ii. p. 229.

1855.

Recall of Sir John Burgoyne.

unused the immense apparatus which had just been with difficulty completed."[1] Sir John Burgoyne, accused of Peninsular prejudice, was recalled by Lord Panmure. Sir John was past seventy, and he had given the questionable advice to attack Sebastopol from the south. But he had been indefatigable, despite his years, and his successor, Sir Harry Jones, did not improve upon his methods. In France, as well as in England, there was much impatience with the slow progress of the siege, and General Bizot, the chief of the French engineers, as Sir John Burgoyne was of the English, would have been superseded by General Niel if he had not been removed by a Russian bullet. General Niel had secret instructions from the Emperor, of which Lord Raglan knew nothing, to delay the operations until His Majesty himself came upon the scene. This base treachery was not known until the fall of the Empire revealed the secrets of the French War Office.[2] To relieve Lord Raglan, General Simpson was sent out as his Chief of the Staff. But this was not a fortunate appointment, nor was it ever explained. A far more important, and indeed a most salutary, step was the Army Service Bill, which authorised the enlistment of soldiers for three years, instead of for ten. Seldom has so valuable a piece of army reform been carried out in the middle of a great campaign. It was hardly noticed at the time as more than a measure requisite for an emergency. It was really the stepping-stone to the modern system of reserves liable to be called up when wanted, upon which all our military arrangements now depend.

The germ of short service.

One of Lord Palmerston's first performances as Leader of the House was a graceful tribute to that veteran Radical, Joseph Hume, a more vigilant

[1] *Histoire du Second Empire*, vol. i. p. 333.
[2] Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. vii. p. 222.

guardian of the public purse than many Chancellors of the Exchequer. But, as Walter Bagehot said, no one is really sorry when a political economist dies. Hume died on the 20th of February 1855. Within a fortnight another death made the money-markets of Europe go up by leaps and bounds in anticipation of peace. Eupatoria, at the northern extremity of Calamita Bay, had, at Lord Raglan's suggestion, been occupied by Turks under their only efficient Commander, Omar Pasha. On the 17th of February, the Russians made a determined attempt to drive out the Turks and to take possession of the place. They were repulsed with heavy loss. The news of this defeat found the Emperor Nicholas in a low state of health and a depressed frame of mind. Though not yet sixty years of age, he had persuaded himself that, as he came of a short-lived race, he was near his end. Fretting under this fresh reverse, he disregarded the advice of his physicians, exposed himself to the cold at a military review, caught a chill, and died on the 2nd of March. When he said that his best Generals were General January and General February, he little thought that he would himself succumb to the inclement weather of his own country.[1] He was an Autocrat of the Autocrats, and there was an almost universal belief that his more liberal successor, the second Alexander, would be less unwilling to accept a reasonable compromise. Under the influence of this hopeful view the Plenipotentiaries at Vienna proceeded on the 15th of March to the discussion of the Four Points. But just because of his reputation for comparative mildness and tolerance, the Emperor Alexander was bound to show that he

1855.

Death of Joseph Hume.

The battle of Eupatoria.

Death of the Emperor Nicholas.

Accession of Alexander the Second.

[1] If any one wants to see the effect of war upon the minds not of soldiers in the field, but of civilians at home, let him turn to John Leech's celebrated cartoon "General February turns Traitor," in *Punch* for the 10th of March 1855 — brilliant in conception, admirable in execution, savage in sentiment, and odious in result.

1855. cared no less than his father for the honour of Russia. On the Third Point, the proposed limitation of Russian ships in the Black Sea, Prince Gortschakoff[1] absolutely declined to give way, and on the 23rd of April Lord Palmerston announced, rather prematurely, that the Conference was at an end. As a matter of fact it continued to sit till the 4th of June. But Lord Palmerston did not desire its success. He thought that Russia had not yet been sufficiently humiliated, and he was determined to crush her. She was not crushed yet. The last serious fighting, on the 24th of February, had resulted in a complete failure of the Zouaves to drive the Russians from their advanced trenches in front of the Malakoff, which was the real key of Sebastopol.

Failure of the Vienna Conference.

While the Conference of the four Powers with Russia was still sitting at Vienna, the Emperor and Empress of the French paid a visit to the Queen and Prince Albert at Windsor. They arrived in London on the 16th of April, and were greeted with much popular enthusiasm. This was not strange. For the Empress was one of the most beautiful women in Europe, and the Emperor was at war with the Queen's enemies. The impression made by this unscrupulous adventurer upon the Queen was more surprising. She was perfectly delighted with him, and perhaps he never gave a stronger proof of his cleverness than in the effect he produced upon her. The Prince had already visited him at Boulogne, and talked with him freely over the affairs of Europe. To the Queen he was a stranger. But he did his best to captivate her, and he succeeded. His method was a mixture of judicious flattery and apparent candour. He showed a minute acquaintance with all the events in Her Majesty's life, and even with the

The French sovereigns in England.

The French Emperor and the Queen.

[1] Prince Alexander Gortschakoff, the diplomatist, not Prince Michael, the soldier.

dresses she had worn on particular occasions. He endeavoured to excuse his confiscation of Orleanist property, which, however difficult to justify, was to most minds innocence itself compared with the crime of December. But he knew very well to whom he was speaking. The family of Louis Philippe were friends of the Queen, and monarchs, even constitutional monarchs, seldom feel deeply shocked by the destruction of Republics. That he should have overcome Her Majesty's prejudice against the despoiler of Royalty is a remarkable proof of his personal influence. When he was invested with the Garter, the Emperor, says Greville, addressed the Queen in a short speech, which that prince of political diarists thus summarises: "I have sworn to be faithful to your Majesty, and to serve you to the best of my ability, and my whole future life shall be spent in proving the sincerity with which I have thus sworn, and my resolution to devote myself to your service." He assured her that nothing had so much affected him as the sight of Her Majesty, then a girl of eighteen, going to open Parliament in person after the General Election of 1837. He was in high good humour, and well he might be. In 1837, not twenty years before, he was an obscure refugee, with little money and no prospects. Now he was the supreme ruler of France, the liberties of Frenchmen lay crushed beneath his feet, and he was associating on equal terms as an honoured guest with the Queen of England, the lineal descendant of Plantagenet Kings. His head was turned, and he conceived a plan which fairly horrified not merely his own advisers, but the Ministers of the Queen. He announced that he would go himself to the Crimea, and put the finishing touch to the siege of Sebastopol. Marshal Vaillant, the French Minister of War, was in despair, Lord Clarendon was bewildered, and yet there seemed

1855.

Louis Napoleon, K.G.

The Emperor's proposed visit to the Crimea.

1855. nothing to be done. For the Emperor was his own master, and his Ministers were simply his clerks. They could only work upon his jealousy, and this at last they successfully did. He had then no heir, except his cousin Prince Napoleon, whom he suspected and disliked. It was pointed out to him that Prince Napoleon was the only possible Regent, and the Prince was persuaded to insist that he should have the same despotic powers as the Emperor. To that the Emperor would not consent, and by this dexterous management, to which the fear of a revolution at Paris may have contributed, a British General was preserved against the indignity of taking orders from a foreign sovereign —

His design frustrated.

> Who never set a squadron in the field,
> Nor the division of a battle knew
> More than a spinster.

While the French Emperor was discussing war and diplomacy with the Queen, Prince Albert, Lord Palmerston, and Lord Clarendon, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced his first Budget. If we are to believe Greville, with whom he was on friendly terms, Sir George Cornewall Lewis disapproved of the war, and believed that it ought to have been avoided. But when he entered the Cabinet, the die had long been cast, and he thought himself justified in providing for the inevitable expenses of an avoidable campaign. He had to meet a deficiency of twenty-three millions. To have raised it all by taxation would have been heroic finance, and the House of Commons, though it contained many patriots, contained few heroes. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, adopting a middle course, announced on the 20th of April that he should ask for a loan of sixteen millions, and lay the rest upon the taxes. The income-tax would be brought

Cornewall Lewis's first Budget.

up from fourteen to sixteen pence in the pound. Three shillings a hundredweight would be added to the duty on sugar, a penny a pound to the duty on coffee, threepence a pound to the duty on tea, and two shillings a gallon to the duty on spirits. These were fair and reasonable proposals, affecting all classes of the community, who were alike in favour of the war. They met with no serious resistance from any quarter of the House. Ignorant impatience of taxation has never been a characteristic of the English people. They may be persuaded that a war is wrong, but they will not turn against it merely because it is expensive. Whatever the Government asked in Committee of Ways and Means, or in Committee of Supply, was readily and immediately granted by the representatives of the nation. Mr. Gladstone did not object to the loan. But he uttered a curious and cryptic warning, which came strangely from a Peelite and a free trader. If, he said, the taxes were to be increased, they might have to face Protection. He must have temporarily forgotten the strongest of all arguments against a Protective tariff, which is that it brings less into the coffers of the Treasury than it takes from the pockets of the taxpayers.

1855.

Gladstone's warning.

The Conference at Vienna broke down on the third of the Four Points. Russia conceded without much difficulty the joint Protectorate of the Principalities, the collective Protectorate of the Christians, and the free navigation of the Danube. She declined either the neutrality of the Black Sea, which would have closed it to all ships of war, or the limitation of the number which she might keep there herself. Two other proposals, which came from the Austrian Chancellor, Count Buol, she was willing to consider. One was the principle of counterpoise, which would have given the Allies the right to balance the number of Russian ships by a

The Russian rejection of the Third Point.

1855. proportionate contingent of their own. This plan was undoubtedly a bad one, for the simple reason that it would have involved the constantly recurring likelihood of another European war. But the second alternative put forward by Austria was practical, and might well have been accepted. This was that the Russian fleet in the Black Sea should not be increased beyond the strength at which it then stood. Very soon after his arrival at Vienna Lord John Russell began to complain of his colleagues at home, and this time not without grounds. They did not keep him properly informed of their policy, and they did not insist upon a Turkish Plenipotentiary being sent to the Conference. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, according to Lord Clarendon, "never would help anybody else, and would always thwart any business which was not carried on at Constantinople, where he could have the principal finger in the pie."[1] "The Sublime Porte," wrote Lord John in an official despatch, "has never, as I am informed, been taught to look on these negotiations as serious." Lord John asked for Lord Stratford's recall. But Lord Stratford knew that Lord Palmerston was behind him, and that the more obstacles he put in the way of the Conference, the better the Prime Minister would be pleased. Lord Clarendon, who was sincerely desirous of peace, could not move a step without France, and the Emperor was still bent on continuing the war. His determination cost him the services of M. Drouyn de Lhuys, one of the few honest and capable men who were willing to act under him. M. Drouyn resigned early in May, to be succeeded by the corrupt and incompetent Walewski. The Emperor's reasons were from his own point of view conclusive. Marshal Vaillant, his Minister of War, said to him in the presence of

Lord John and his colleagues.

March 26.

Lord Stratford's attitude.

[1] Walpole's *Life of Lord John Russell*, vol. ii. p. 251.

the British Ambassador at Paris, Lord Cowley, "I am not a politician, but I know the feelings of the army. I am sure that if, after having spent months in the siege of Sebastopol, we return unsuccessful, the army will not be satisfied."[1] Louis Napoleon without the army would have been in 1855 what he was in 1848, and like Charles the Second he was resolved not to set out again on his travels. It is impossible to blame him. But England had been brought to a pretty pass when she must needs shape her policy to keep him on his throne. Lord John Russell, who, like Drouyn de Lhuys, considered the Austrian proposals sufficient, also tendered his resignation. He was, however, induced by the entreaties of Lord Palmerston to withdraw it, and to adopt in appearance the opinions of his colleagues. This unlucky decision involved him in a dilemma from which he could not, and did not, escape without discredit. 1855.

On the 24th of May Mr. Disraeli proposed a vote of censure on the Government for their supposed slackness in the conduct of the war, and strongly condemned the negotiations at Vienna. Mr. Disraeli, who was furious at Lord Derby's refusal to take office, had no other motive than the instinct of an Opposition to oppose. Mr. Gladstone took the opportunity of freeing himself from further responsibility for the war. Admitting, as he was bound to admit, that its original inception was just, he argued that its objects had been attained, and that the proposed limitation of Russian ships in the Black Sea was neither practicable nor desirable. This brought up Lord John, who insisted that the limit was necessary for the protection of Constantinople. His speech produced a great effect, and Mr. Disraeli's motion was defeated by a majority of a hundred. But the tide was beginning Disraeli's vote of censure. Gladstone's pacific speech. Lord John's reply.

[1] Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. vii. p. 348.

1855. to turn. Mr. Gladstone was followed and supported by two young members of great ability, and still greater promise. One was Mr. Roundell Palmer, the first lawyer of his generation. The other was Lord Stanley, the eldest son of Lord Derby, who, differing from his father in all other respects, resembled him in intellectual power. The very next day Lord Grey delivered in the House of Lords the ablest speech of his long and controversial life. Lord Grey did not deal in mere generalities, or in disquisition upon the horrors of war. He came to close quarters with the subject. He showed, by a careful and even minute examination of the Blue Books, that the charges of dishonesty against Russia were unfounded, that Turkey was a disgrace to Europe, and that it could not be the interest of England to uphold the Sultan's rule. That such a speech should have made no impression is inconceivable. But it was coldly received, and no lay peer concurred in it, except Lord Lyttelton. The Bishop of Oxford, a sensitive barometer, expressed in a trimming oration the opinion that it was time for peace. The bishop was a good hater, and there was no one he hated more than Lord Palmerston. He would not, however, have attacked even Lord Palmerston if there had not been a perceptible change in public opinion. Another and a greater churchman took a similar line. Montalembert, whose character and talents made his support of the Empire invaluable, pleaded in the *Corps Législatif* for agreement with Austria, the great Catholic Power. The French Parliament was dead, and to speak in it was like speaking in a vault. But Montalembert appealed to a larger audience, and even in France the speech of an Imperialist could not be altogether suppressed. The failure of the Conference at Vienna exhibited to the world the spectacle of the three great Powers

Lord Grey's protest against the war.

Montalembert's support of Austria.

fighting to the death over the question how many ships of war one of them should be allowed to keep in a sea with which neither of the others had any concern. It was impossible even for Lord Palmerston to silence the voice of reason in the House of Commons. Sir George Cornewall Lewis was of necessity dumb. He had, as the Greek poet says, an ox upon his tongue. But when Mr. Milner Gibson, on the 4th of June, denounced the continuance of the war, he was for the first time supported by Sir James Graham and Mr. Sidney Herbert. Sir William Molesworth, the Radical Minister, was put up from the Treasury Bench, and vindicated his personal consistency, which is dearer to most politicians than the justice of their cause. John Bright, in that simply beautiful style which commanded the admiration alike of workmen and of scholars, spoke in abhorrence of further slaughter. Mr. Cardwell, in more measured language, took the same side. Mr. Walpole, a friend and colleague of Lord Derby, declared the proposed limit of Russian ships to be "illusory as well as humiliating." A young Tory, destined to fill with distinction the highest places in the State,[1] argued in the same sense. Against all this weight of reason and logic Lord Palmerston had nothing to set except an imaginative picture of Russia as a Colossus stretching from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. If the war was still popular with the unthinking many, it had begun to excite grave doubts and scruples among the thinking few.

1855.

The peace party joined by the Peelites.

Whatever may be thought of Lord Palmerston's policy, he certainly showed the utmost vigour in the prosecution of the war. The prospects of success for the Allies were much improved by the resignation of General Canrobert and the appoint-

[1] Lord Robert Cecil, afterwards Marquess of Salisbury.

1855.

Resignation of Canrobert, and appointment of Pélissier.

ment of General Pélissier to succeed him, on the 16th of May. Canrobert was an excellent General of Division, and, much to his honour, he remained before Sebastopol in that capacity. But he had no military genius, and he had the greatest difficulty in making up his mind. Pélissier's motto was "The siege, the siege, and nothing beyond it."[1] He was an old soldier of great experience, and Canrobert had served under him in Algeria. If he had been appointed at the commencement of the campaign, there would have been far less friction between French and English, inasmuch as he had a profound respect for Lord Raglan, and also the courage, which Canrobert lacked, to resist the interference of the Emperor. In spite of his devotion to the siege, or perhaps because of it, General Pélissier thoroughly concurred in the expedition to Kertsch, of which Canrobert, or rather the Emperor, had disapproved. Kertsch is a town in the Cimmerian Bosphorus, which connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Azov. Its importance to the Russians, and therefore to the Allies, lay in the fact that it was used as a storehouse of provisions for the garrison of Sebastopol. The naval expedition was commanded by Sir Edmund Lyons and Admiral Bruat, the successor of Admiral Hamelin, who had become Minister of Marine. Sir George Brown, recovered from his wound, and General d'Autemarre were in charge of the land force. The superiority of the Allies in numbers made serious resistance impossible, and Kertsch, together with the neighbouring town of Yenikale, fell into their hands. This capture was most valuable, for it materially weakened the defence of Sebastopol. The Russians were in the habit of sending fifteen hundred waggons daily from Kertsch to Sebastopol and other parts of the Crimea. Seventeen thousand tons of

The expedition to Kertsch.

[1] De la Gorce, *Histoire du Second Empire*, vol. i. p. 395.

coal were seized there by the Allies for the benefit of the fleet. Four million pounds of corn and half a million pounds of flour were destroyed by the Russians on the 24th of May before the captors of Kertsch celebrated the Queen's birthday by entering the town. Altogether it was estimated that four months' rations for an army of a hundred thousand men were lost to Russia, and this was a loss which she never made good. About seventy guns were also taken, and this was done, as Sir George Brown said, "without striking a blow, and almost without firing a shot." [1] 1855.

But the 18th of June, the anniversary of Waterloo, was celebrated in a much less fortunate manner than the Queen's birthday. It was selected by General Pélissier for a combined attack upon the Malakoff and the Redan.[2] The White Quarries had already been taken by the English, and the Mamelon by the French. Lord Raglan was not favourable to this assault, believing that a continuous bombardment was a better method for the reduction of Sebastopol. General Pélissier's plan, in which Lord Raglan for the sake of union concurred, was that the French should attack the Malakoff, while the English assailed the Redan. Early in the morning of the 18th the fight began. The French force was under the command of General Regnaud de St. Jean d'Angély, the chief

The joint attack on the Redan.

[1] "We are masters of the Sea of Azoff without a casualty." — Lord Raglan to Lord Panmure, 27th May. A few days after this, on the 5th of June, a boat's crew, under Lieutenant Geneste, attempting to land prisoners with a flag of truce at Hango in the Gulf of Finland, were shot down by Cossacks, and the survivors kept in captivity. This was the worst outrage committed in the war, and a crime against the law of nature as well as against the law of nations.

[2] Among those who distinguished themselves at this time in the trenches were two young officers, destined to achieve on different fields an equally durable fame. One was Garnet Joseph Wolseley, afterwards Viscount Wolseley, Field-Marshal Commander-in-Chief. The other was Charles George Gordon, the pacificator of China, the hero and martyr of Khartoum.

1855. of the Imperial Guard. The English force was directed by Sir George Brown. The Russians were fully informed of this joint movement, and made ample preparations to meet it. It began badly. General Mayran despatched his columns too soon without waiting for the proper signal. They were received with a storm of grape and round-shot, by which they were almost annihilated, and their General was killed. If General Mayran was too soon, General Brunet was too late. His division became entangled in the trenches, and as the men struggled out they were shot down, Brunet among the first. The third French Division, General d'Autemarre's, was more fortunate. His battalion of *Chasseurs* took the Gervais Battery at a run, and drove out the Russian artillerymen at the point of the bayonet. But one battalion could not storm the Malakoff, and the *Chasseurs*, though supported by General Niel, were eventually driven back with loss. The British troops, also in three divisions, were ordered by Lord Raglan to advance upon the Redan. It was an order which should not in the circumstances have been given, for the failure of the French was certain, and to take the Redan without taking the Malakoff was out of the question. But the British commander considered himself bound by his agreement with Pélissier, and the advance was made. The Russians kept quiet until the storming party were within a few yards of the Redan. Then their cannon opened with one of those scourging fires before which no human force can stand. The riflemen lay down and fired at the gunners. But the supports did not come up. Many of them were raw recruits, and they would not march to certain death. A few old soldiers who followed their officers, and the officers who led them, including Colonel Lacy Yea, the hero of

the Alma, were shot down in a moment. In an equally hopeless onslaught upon the left side of the Redan Sir John Campbell fell at the head of his brigade. 1855.

Truth sits upon the lips of dying men, and the cry of "murder" which was heard from some of the wounded on this fatal day was unfortunately true. The mismanagement of the whole affair from beginning to end was utterly deplorable. The 18th Royal Irish under General Eyre held the cemetery outside Sebastopol, and even penetrated into the town. But they had at last to fall back, leaving a third of their number behind them. "I never before witnessed," said Lord Raglan in his despatch, "such a continued and heavy fire of grape, combined with musketry, from the enemy's works, which appeared to be fully manned." The victory of the Russians was crushing and complete. The blame must be divided between the French and the English Commanders. General Pélissier was guilty of fatal precipitation and culpable rashness in not continuing the bombardment before he ordered the assault. Lord Raglan sacrificed many lives to no purpose by attempting the capture of the Redan when the attack upon the Malakoff had failed. He acted against his own better judgment in deference to the real or imaginary exigencies of the alliance with the Emperor of the French. The dire consequences of that dreadful day, the day which had been for half a century, and is for ever, associated with the memory of his illustrious and immortal chief, so weighed upon his mind and depressed his spirits that he fell an easy victim to the prevailing epidemic. He died of cholera on the 28th of June 1855, in his sixty-eighth year. Causes of its failure. Death of Lord Raglan.

During the period which elapsed between the battle of the Alma and his death, Lord Raglan was the subject of much criticism that he did not

1855. deserve. He was often condemned by public opinion for defects of organisation due to the Government at home, and for an inactivity which was imposed upon him by St. Arnaud or by Canrobert. The tragic circumstances of his end, and the passionate eloquence of Kinglake, exalted him into a paladin of romance. He was a man of dauntless courage and chivalrous character, the type of a soldier and a gentleman. But he was not equal to the position of Commander-in-Chief. During the long years of peace after the Napoleonic wars his duties had been chiefly clerical, and for the responsibility which the Crimean expedition involved he had had no training whatsoever. He lacked authority, and he had not a strategic mind. Against the combinations of such an intellect as Todleben's his "Peninsular prejudices" were helpless. In a battle he was everywhere. During the weary drudgery of the trenches he seemed to be without resource, and for the first few months of the siege the soldiers hardly knew him by sight.[1] Nor did he call the attention of the Government in time to the defects of transport and commissariat. No man, however, showed more patience or magnanimity under trying conditions than Lord Raglan. In his despatches he never mentioned himself, and he was always willing to bear the reproach of mistakes committed by others. No wonder that such a man should inspire enthusiastic devotion in those who knew him. It was his misfortune to be placed where his performances were naturally contrasted with those of the great master under whom he had served.

[1] His own explanation was that he did not wish to disturb the wearied men by making them turn out. Lord Raglan's intentions were always excellent. But the years he spent at the Horse Guards had left their mark upon him.

1855. Lord Raglan and the Press.

But Lord Raglan suffered under some trials to which the Duke of Wellington was a stranger. He was the first General to be accompanied or surrounded by special correspondents of enterprising newspapers, and yet he was entrusted with no military censorship of any kind. There was no limit to what might be written and published about the state of the army under his command, except the discretion of correspondents at the front and the discretion of editors at home. The correspondents trusted their editors. The editors trusted their correspondents. The gifted and vivacious Irishman who described the progress of the campaign in the columns of the *Times* conferred a public benefit, if he did not discharge a public duty, by calling attention to the needs of the soldiers. But, on the other hand, Mr. Russell's letters were of inestimable value to the defenders of Sebastopol. In a private and confidential communication to the Duke of Newcastle, dated from Sebastopol the 4th of January 1855, Lord Raglan enclosed a copy of the *Times* for the 18th of December, with the following among other comments: "Some time ago the correspondent stated for general information, and practically for that of Prince Mentschikoff, the exact position in which the powder for our siege batteries was deposited, and he now suggests the ease with which the ships in Balaklava harbour could be set on fire. He moreover affords the Russian General the satisfaction of knowing that our guns stick in the mud, and our horses die under their exertions. . . . I am very doubtful, now that the communications are so rapid, whether a British army can long be maintained in presence of a powerful enemy, that enemy having at his command, through the English press, and from London to his headquarters by telegraph, every detail that can be

1855. required of the numbers, condition, and equipment of his opponent's force." While these disclosures were being made, in spite of urgent remonstrances from the Secretary of State, the same journal, then at the height of its reputation and the pinnacle of its power, was daily printing bitter attacks upon Lord Raglan and his Headquarter Staff. There Mr. Delane and his colleagues were of course within their right, and the compulsory silence of the French press was a loss, as well as a humiliation, to France. General Canrobert's exemption from unofficial criticism neither quickened his impulse nor strengthened his hands. But

Raglan and Newcastle.

unfortunately the Duke of Newcastle was so frightened by the public opinion presented to him by the Press that he himself turned against Lord Raglan. With the assent of the Cabinet, he wrote a despatch censuring the military administration in the Crimea, while in a series of private letters he urged the removal of the Adjutant-General, General Escourt, and the Quartermaster-General, Sir Richard Airey. The tone of the despatch would have justified, and perhaps compelled, the resignation of a civilian who had so completely lost the confidence of the Government. But a General in the field cannot well resign, and Lord Raglan never thought of it. He replied with natural indignation, and at the same time with perfect calmness, warmly supporting the accused officers, and declaring that he devoted to the discharge of his own duty the whole of the day, and the greater part of the night. Soon after the receipt of Lord Raglan's reply the Government of Lord Aberdeen was defeated, and the Duke of Newcastle retired from office. It might have been thought that now, at all events, Lord Raglan would be loyally supported from Downing Street. A vigorous prosecution of the war was what continental demagogues

call the "mandate" of the new Ministry, and Lord Palmerston had the reputation of always standing up for his subordinates. But the exact opposite was the case. If the Duke of Newcastle chastised Lord Raglan with whips, Lord Panmure chastised him with scorpions. The Duke, though he weakly yielded to an unfair outcry, and meanly sought a scapegoat, always used the language of a gentleman. Lord Panmure was coarse and insolent. He called the *Times* "villainous," as the Duke of Newcastle had called it "ruffianly." But, like the Duke, he did its bidding. In his despatch to the Field-Marshal commanding the Crimean expedition, he wrote, "It would appear that your visits to the camp were few and far between, and your Staff seem to have known as little as yourself of the condition of your gallant men." In a private letter he added, "Your Staff must be changed, and that radically."[1] Neither the Duke of Newcastle's despatch nor Lord Panmure's was published at the time. But they were both calculated seriously to embarrass a commander engaged in an arduous campaign, with a large part of his army disabled by sickness. Lord Hardinge, who saw Lord Panmure's letter, was profoundly disgusted by it, as well he might be. What made the whole conduct of both Governments, Lord Aberdeen's and Lord Palmerston's, utterly indefensible was that they never had the slightest intention of recalling Lord Raglan. They knew him to be indispensable, if only because he was the one man who could successfully maintain the French alliance through such an instrument as Canrobert. Lord Raglan's answer to Lord Panmure was crushing and conclusive. He declined once more to sacrifice his Staff, and declared that if he were deprived of General Airey

1855.

Raglan and Panmure.

Feb. 12.

[1] Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. vii. p. 299.

1855. he should have a serious loss inflicted on him, while the army would suffer a deprivation which could not be made good. He complained, with perfect justice, that having passed a life of honour, and served the Crown for more than fifty years, he was charged with every species of neglect without a particle of evidence on the word of irresponsible informants.[1] Lord Panmure made a sort of awkward half-apology, explaining that he could not know Lord Raglan to be innocent, and only wanted him to say so.[2] But General Simpson was charged, as Chief of the Staff, a new term in the military vocabulary of England, to investigate the conduct of his colleagues, and it was not until he reported that, in difficult circumstances, they had done all which men could do that the official attacks upon Lord Raglan ceased. They reflect deep discredit upon the Duke of Newcastle, and still deeper upon Lord Panmure. But the worst offender of all was Lord Palmerston, who actually wanted to change Lord Raglan's Staff without Lord Raglan's consent.[3] This outrage was frustrated by Mr. Gladstone before he resigned, and by other members of the Cabinet. But Lord Raglan had no real champion in official circles at home except Lord Hardinge, and his death before the completion of his labours may not unfairly be ascribed less to the defeat at the Redan on the 18th of June than to the disloyalty of Ministers who desired to be associated in his triumphs without sharing the responsibilities of his trials.

In France the 18th of June had serious consequences. Although Parliament was almost wholly dumb, and the Press almost entirely gagged, the

[1] Lord Raglan to Lord Panmure, 3rd March 1855.
[2] Lord Panmure to Lord Raglan, 19th March 1855.
[3] Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. vii. p. 287.

signs of public discontent could not be ignored by the nervous occupant of the Tuileries, and the Emperor was with difficulty prevented by Marshal Vaillant from recalling General Pélissier.[1] In England the war was still popular, but a highly critical spirit prevailed, and there was a powerful Opposition in the House of Commons, who would not forego their rights. Speaking at the Trinity House on the 9th of June, Prince Albert declared that constitutional Government was on its trial, and urged the duty of placing more confidence in the Ministers of the Crown. The speech, made in the presence of Lord Palmerston, was not altogether judicious, nor was the resentment which it caused unnatural. Englishmen thought, and were justified in thinking, that they knew more about constitutional principles than either Prince Albert himself or his German mentor, Baron Stockmar. At the same time it must, in justice to the Prince, be observed, that so far as his remarks had any personal bearing, they tended to support the very Minister whom he had most reason to dislike. Moreover, there was general discontent throughout the country with the administration of the public service, and with the favour shown to a privileged class. The first Secretary of State for War belonged to the highest rank in the peerage, and he had practically acknowledged himself to be unfit for his post. Lord Raglan, at that time unjustly depreciated, was the younger son of a Duke. Lord Lucan and Lord Cardigan, who had no qualifications for command except personal courage, were Earls. So was Lord Aberdeen, then the most unpopular man in the country. To reform the army was at the moment impossible. But a proposal made in the House of Commons on the 6th of July for throwing open the Civil

1855.

Office and privilege.

[1] De la Gorce, *Histoire du Second Empire*, vol. i. pp. 411, 412.

1855. Service to competition, in accordance with the Report of Sir Charles Trevelyan and Sir Stafford Northcote, was only rejected by a majority of 15, and received the powerful support of Mr. Gladstone.

The House, however, ignoring Prince Albert, soon plunged into the more attractive region of party politics. Irritated by the rejection of the Austrian proposals at the Conference of Vienna, Count Buol, the Austrian Chancellor, disclosed the fact that they had been supported by Lord John Russell, as well as by M. Drouyn de Lhuys. Lord John was of course asked whether this was true, and of course he could not deny it. For fear of endangering the alliance with the French Emperor, to whom the policy of Austria was, as he now found, unpalatable, he refrained from taking at home the line he had taken at Vienna, and let it be supposed that he had sacrificed his convictions rather than resign his office. This was not, as we have seen, the case, and his colleagues in the Cabinet, knowing that it was not, were willing to stand by him. But the storm proved too strong for him, and for them. Lord John received no sympathy from any quarter. Mr. Cobden exclaimed that he repented of the vote which he had given against the Government of Lord Derby, for it had cost a hundred millions sterling and twenty thousand lives. As Lord Derby was a vehement supporter of the war, Mr. Cobden's reasoning is unwontedly obscure. But Lord John's confessions undoubtedly strengthened the arguments of the far-sighted patriots, miscalled "Russians," who believed that an opportunity for making peace had been thrown away. Mr. Disraeli seldom threw away opportunities, and on the 10th of July his intimate friend Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton gave notice of a vote of censure on Lord John. The Cabinet were still prepared to support their

Lord John Russell's false position.

Proposed vote of censure.

plenipotentiary. But revolt broke out where it was least expected. Those members of the Government who do not sit in the Cabinet are usually the meekest and the most subservient of all ministerialists. They vote with the regularity of machines for a policy they have had no hand in framing, and they never speak except on the business of their Departments, or by special request from the Leader of the House. Mr. Bernal Osborne's singular outbreak in the debate on Mr. Roebuck's motion was regarded as portentous. It proved to be also contagious. Headed by Mr. Bouverie, Vice-President of the Board of Trade, these long-suffering subordinates rebelled, and intimated that unless Lord John Russell resigned, they would vote with Bulwer-Lytton. Lord John once more tendered his resignation, and this time Lord Palmerston made no effort to retain him. The motion of censure was accordingly withdrawn, after a bitter attack upon Lord John by the mover, and an extremely clever speech from Mr. Disraeli, in which he gave the credit of rejecting the Austrian proposals to the Emperor of the French. This was not the whole truth, for Palmerston would have rejected them on his own account. But it showed that Mr. Disraeli knew more than any one else outside the Cabinet. It showed also, not for the first nor for the last time, his sympathetic admiration for Louis Napoleon, whose career was not more wonderful than his own.

1855.

The revolt within the Government.

Resignation of Lord John.

The Report of the Sebastopol Committee, which had been presented to the House of Commons on the 18th of June, was brought up for discussion on the 17th of July.[1] The Committee found

Report of the Sebastopol Committee.

[1] This very able, though in some respects unfair, document was substantially the work of Lord Seymour, afterwards Duke of Somerset. The Chairman's draft Report was almost entirely rejected in favour of Lord Seymour's.

1855. that sufficient care was not taken for the wants and sufferings of the soldiers, and the distribution of green coffee was strongly denounced. The transport was declared to have been inefficient, and under no responsible head, as both Lord Raglan and Admiral Dundas refused to exercise any authority over it. But the strongest censure of the Committee, which did not spare either Sir Hamilton Seymour,[1] or Lord Stratford de Redcliffe,[2] was reserved for the Administration of Lord Aberdeen. "Your Committee report that the sufferings of the army mainly resulted from the circumstances under which the expedition to the Crimea was undertaken and executed. The Administration which ordered that expedition had no adequate information as to the amount of the forces in the Crimea. They were not acquainted with the strength of the fortresses to be attacked, or with the resources of the country to be invaded. They hoped and expected the expedition to be immediately successful, and as they did not foresee the probability of a protracted struggle, they made no preparation for a winter campaign." In this language, the language of the Report, there is some exaggeration and some error. The Foreign Office was in possession before the war of a pretty accurate estimate of the Russian forces in the Chersonese, and the fortifications of Sebastopol were not in existence when the battle of the Alma was fought.[3] If the Duke of Newcastle had been a Carnot, he could not have foretold Todleben. But when the necessary deductions have been made, enough remains to justify the general inferences of the Committee. Yet when Mr. Roebuck proposed a vote of censure on the late Government,

Roebuck's vote of censure.

[1] Ambassador at Petersburg. [2] Ambassador at Constantinople.
[3] It will be remembered that neither Lord Raglan nor the British Government was responsible for the fatal delay after the battle.

he was defeated by more than a hundred votes. 1855.
The House was beginning to have a little too much of Mr. Roebuck, in whose patriotic ardour there was often a disagreeable flavour of personal spite. Men did not forget that when the Committee was appointed, he had had the supremely bad taste to speak of Lord Raglan as "the prisoner in the dock."[1] Moreover, censure of a Government which has ceased to exist is a *brutum fulmen*, for it produces no effect at all. Lord Aberdeen and the Duke of Newcastle could only be punished by impeachment, which even Mr. Roebuck did not propose, and half the Cabinet of Lord Palmerston, including Lord Palmerston himself, would have been compelled to resign if the motion had been carried. It was not, however, formally rejected, Its failure.
but shelved by the previous question, moved by General Peel, a member of the Committee, and seconded by Lord Robert Cecil. Lord John Russell did something to regain the credit he had lost in January by declaring in debate that every member of Lord Aberdeen's Cabinet was fully responsible for the consequences of the expedition to the Crimea.

Mr. Roebuck's Committee was not the only instrument of inquiry into the conduct of the campaign. Lord Palmerston had fulfilled his promise by sending two Commissioners, Sir John McNeill and Colonel Tulloch, to the Crimea. The Commissioners censured several officers, including Sir Richard Airey, the Quartermaster-General, Lord Lucan, and Lord Cardigan. But these were all subsequently acquitted, Airey with undoubted justice, by a professional tribunal before which

The Crimean Commission.

[1] Roebuck's chief supporter at this time, an abler man than himself, was Austen Henry Layard, the explorer of Nineveh, then Member for Aylesbury, afterwards Sir Henry Layard, Minister at Madrid and Ambassador at Constantinople. Mr. Layard had been an eye-witness of the Alma and of Inkerman.

1855. they demanded to be brought,[1] and the permanent value of the Crimean Report lies chiefly in the just tribute which the Commissioners paid to the heroic endurance of the Crimean army. "Both men and officers," they wrote, "when so reduced that they were hardly fit for the lighter duties of the camp, scorned to be excused the severe and perilous work of the trenches, lest they should throw an undue amount of work upon their comrades. Yet they maintained every foot of ground against the enemy, and with numbers so small that few other troops would have even made the attempt." Not less remarkable were the entire absence of serious crime, the rarity of drunkenness, and the exemplary standard of conduct observed among all ranks of the soldiers.

Before Parliament rose, the Government of Lord Palmerston narrowly escaped a defeat which they richly deserved. They proposed a joint guarantee with France for a loan of five millions to Turkey. This profligate waste was strongly opposed in unanswerable speeches both by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli. The Government carried their loan on the 20th of July by a majority of three votes only. It is a thousand pities that the balance was not the other way. For, as might be expected, the money was not spent upon the war, but squandered by the Sultan upon his palace and his seraglio. Well might Mr. Gladstone exclaim that Turkey, "our old ally," was "such an ally as Æneas found Anchises in his flight from Troy."[2] This was in the last Eastern debate of the session, raised on the 3rd of August by Mr. Laing, a hard-headed Scottish philosopher, and an earnest advocate of peace. Peace was still far off,

The Turkish Loan.

[1] It sat at Chelsea Hospital from the 3rd of April to the 4th of July 1856, and was open to the public.

[2] He had to carry him on his shoulders. — Virgil, *Æneid*, ii. 804.

and Lord Palmerston's views were still in the ascendant. 1855.

But though war necessarily impedes all social and political legislation, one measure of real and salutary reform was added to the Statute Book in the year 1855. The Queen's Speech which prorogued Parliament on the 14th of August, announced also that the principle of limited liability had become the law of the land. Perhaps no Act ever passed has saved so many families from sudden and ruinous disaster as this unpretending reform. Before 1855 the failure of a commercial company in which a man had invested a hundred pounds involved the loss of every penny he had in the world. After 1855, if the company were limited, he might, of course, lose what he had invested, but he could lose no more. Far less fortunate, and far less wise, was the measure which established the Metropolitan Board of Works. London outside the City had still no system of self-government more central than the vestry. As a remedy for this grievance it was provided that matters of common interest to Londoners, which might properly be charged upon a general rate, should be entrusted to a body composed of representatives from all the vestries sitting together. But the principle of double election has never succeeded in this country, and the method of choosing the vestries themselves left much to be desired. The Metropolitan Board was responsible neither to Parliament nor to the ratepayers. It became a focus of jobbery and corruption. Yet it achieved one magnificent enterprise, and against its misdeeds deserves to be set the construction of the Thames Embankment.

The Limited Liability Act.

The Metropolitan Board of Works.

The session of 1855 was marked by a striking example of mob law. Lord Robert Grosvenor,[1]

[1] Afterwards Lord Ebury.

1855.

The Sunday Trading Bill.

a prominent evangelical and a fussy Sabbatarian, introduced a Bill to put down Sunday trading in London, which was read a second time without a division, and passed safely through Committee. The public, even the London public, appeared to be taking little if any notice of it, and in a few weeks it would probably have been added to the Statute Book. Suddenly it dawned upon the masses of the capital that their personal liberty in eating and drinking was about to be infringed. On Sunday the 24th of June there were hostile demonstrations in Hyde Park, and on the two following Sundays serious riots occurred. Sir George Grey, acting on a view of the law that had not then been called in question, prohibited all meetings in the London parks, which, he said, were meant for general enjoyment. The immediate result of this imprudent order was a serious collision between the police and the crowd, with much breaking of windows and some breaking of heads. But the mob triumphed. On the 2nd of July Lord Robert Grosvenor withdrew his Bill, and the lesson was not forgotten. The following Sunday was the worst of the three, for the rioters celebrated their victory at the expense of peaceful citizens and of the police.

Meanwhile the position of Sebastopol was at last becoming desperate. The capture of Kertsch and Yenikale removed the main source of supplies for the garrison. The losses of the Russians from the bombardment were steadily increasing, and General Todleben, their illustrious engineer, was disabled by a serious wound. Osten-Sacken, the military Governor of the town, was for surrender, and Prince Mentschikoff would probably have agreed with him. But Mentschikoff had been succeeded in March by Prince Michael Gortschakoff, a man of more spirit, who declined to adopt what he regarded as a dishonourable course. On the

contrary, he determined to attack the French under General Herbillon, and the Italians under General La Marmora. On the 15th of August, at night, the Russian army moved down from Mackenzie's Farm, and occupied the range of hills above Tchorgoun. General Read, a Russian officer of Scottish parentage, was opposed to the French. General Liprandi operated against the Italians. The two attacks were delivered simultaneously on the early and misty morning of the 16th. The attack on the left of the line was signally repulsed by the French, and General Read was killed. In the centre the struggle was longer, and for a time more doubtful. But finally the Zouaves drove the enemy back over the Tchernaya, and compelled them to retreat with great loss. General La Marmora retook the advanced positions which his outposts had occupied on the heights of Tchorgoun, and by three o'clock in the afternoon the whole of the Russian army had disappeared. It was estimated to consist of about fifty thousand men, and to have lost at least five thousand, while our Allies lost one thousand out of twenty. The Italians held their position with great tenacity, and after their supports had come up, they defeated Liprandi, thus materially contributing to the success of the day. The British artillery rendered valuable assistance. But the important feature of the engagement was the share taken in it by the Piedmontese. They had hitherto had to contend with no other enemy than cholera, from which they suffered severely. At the Tchernaya they fought with the utmost intrepidity, though their losses were small, and when the news of their exploits reached Turin, Cavour must have felt that a blow for the liberation of Italy had been struck before the walls of Sebastopol. The Queen heard of this memorable battle while she was staying with her husband and

1855.

Battle of the Tchernaya.

1855. children at St. Cloud as the guests of the French Emperor. The visit was in itself successful, and the natural dignity of the British Sovereign made a striking impression upon the critical people of Paris. But neither the war nor the alliance was really popular with the French nation, and the crowds who turned out to see the Royal family in Paris were moved more by curiosity than by any other feeling.

The Fall of Sebastopol. Throughout this summer the state of Sebastopol had been going rapidly from bad to worse. From two hundred and fifty men killed in a day the number rose to a thousand, and even beyond it. But after the battle of the Tchernaya the garrison made no further sortie, and awaited with grim determination the inevitable end. Todleben had recovered, but Admiral Nakhimoff, the successor of Khorniloff, was no more. Even Todleben had given up hope, and the miseries of the besieged were extreme. It was said by one of the victims that statesmen who made wars lightly should be taken to see the hospital for incurable cases at Sebastopol. At length the long agony of the city was brought to a close. After the death of Lord Raglan, General Simpson had succeeded as senior officer to the command, Sir George Brown, a far abler man, being on his way home. It was agreed between Simpson and Pélissier that on the 8th of September the French should assault the Malakoff, while the English, after the Malakoff had fallen, were to make an attempt upon the Redan, which was untenable so long as the enemy were in possession of the Malakoff. Three days before the great attack, a heavy fire was opened by the Allies upon both the Malakoff and the Redan. The number of their guns was eight hundred, and of these six

hundred were French.[1] This terrible bombardment, which the Russians called an "infernal fire," was by far the most destructive of the whole siege, and if it had been continued for a week, it would probably have led to the fall of Sebastopol. The Generals, however, being, it is said, short of ammunition, decided to proceed by assault. The Light and Second Divisions, under General Sir William Codrington, were selected to assail the Redan, although they had served longest in the trenches, were the most fatigued, and contained the largest number of raw recruits. General de Salles commanded the French assault upon the Malakoff. One of the divisional officers under him was Macmahon, long afterwards President of the French Republic. The hour chosen for the French attack was noon, the last the Russians expected, and they were fairly surprised. The first brigade, Macmahon's, was within five-and-twenty yards of the Malakoff when the order for advance was given. The Malakoff was captured in a few minutes, and so entirely unexpected was the assault that the Russian officers were actually found at dinner in a bomb-proof room. They were all killed or taken prisoners. Six times the Russians endeavoured to recapture the Malakoff, and for seven hours Macmahon held out against them. At last they desisted, and Sebastopol was then virtually taken. The Curtain battery was seized by La Motte Rouge, and the little Redan by Dulac. But from both these forts the French were expelled after desperate fighting, with the loss of four thousand men, and a French assault upon the Central Bastion under Le Vaillant was repulsed with frightful slaughter. Upon seeing Pélissier's signal that the Malakoff was in the hands of the French,

1855.

French attack on the Malakoff.

Its success.

[1] Throughout the siege the French artillery was greatly superior to our own.

1855. General Simpson ordered the attack upon the Redan by sending up four rockets. But the force employed for the purpose was far too small, and it was met by such a murderous fire that at first the Light, and afterwards the Second, Division would go no further. The officers did their utmost, especially General Windham, in charge of the Light Division, the first Englishman to enter the Redan. After sending three officers to Sir William Codrington for assistance, who were all killed, Windham went himself. During his absence the ammunition of the English in the Redan was exhausted, their officers were slain, and they were driven out. The British guns were then turned upon the Redan, and silenced the guns of the enemy. The assault was to have been renewed the next day, but the time for renewal never came. The Russians evacuated the south side of Sebastopol during the night, and blew up all their magazines, beginning with the magazine of the Redan. The ships in the harbour were sunk, and the city was laid in ruins. Every building of any size was destroyed, except one large barrack reserved for the dying and the dead.

British attack on the Redan.

Its failure.

Destruction of Southern Sebastopol.

Thus the greatest naval fortress of Russia had ceased to exist, and her fleet was at the bottom of the Black Sea. Yet the war was not over. Prince Gortschakoff, though he made no effort to conceal the magnitude of the disaster, reminded his army that the destruction of Moscow led neither to the conquest of Russia nor to the victory of Napoleon. In sober truth the Allies were at a loss what to do next. The French Emperor, who understood nothing of military affairs, was full of plans. He wanted to expel the Russians from their position at Mackenzie's Farm, to chase them from the northern forts, to drive them as far as Simpheropol, and even to restore Sebastopol. But Pélissier would not

Continuance of the war.

The French Emperor's plans.

take military instructions from the Emperor, and the Emperor could not afford to quarrel with Pélissier. On the contrary he made him Duke of Malakoff, and a Marshal of France. Instead of reconstructing Southern Sebastopol, the Allies exploded what was left of it, and made it a heap of ruins. Lord Palmerston, so far from desiring peace, regarded it as a greater danger to British interests than the continuance of the war, and this opinion he retained even after Louis Napoleon had completely changed his views. The young Emperor Alexander was still reluctant to treat, and he was encouraged by the inaction of the allied forces. To the evils of a divided command were added those of an incompetent commander. General Simpson neither inspired confidence in others nor felt confidence in himself. The British defeat at the Redan, so glorious to General Windham, was fatal to the reputation of Simpson, and on the 11th of November he was permitted to retire in favour of General Sir William Codrington.[1] General Windham, the hero of the Redan, became Chief of the Staff. It had been originally intended to give Windham the first place,[2] but neither his rank nor his previous career seemed to justify so sudden an elevation. Sir William Codrington was the son of the Admiral who commanded the British fleet at Navarino. His appointment could only be explained on the hereditary principle, for his behaviour on the 18th of June, when he left Colonel Windham for hours without reinforcements, thereby losing the Redan, would have been a better ground for putting him on his trial before a court-martial than for setting him at the head of an army. General Simpson's last duty was to join with the French in the plan

1855.

Pélissier's resistance.

Simpson's resignation. Codrington's appointment.

[1] Sir James Simpson was consoled with the Grand Cross of the Bath.

[2] "Greville Memoirs," 2nd October 1855.

1855.

The expedition to Kinburn.

of an expedition against the citadel of Kinburn, near the mouth of the Dnieper, and opposite the great commercial port of Odessa. On the 7th of October the allied fleets sailed from Kamiesch Bay. Odessa was spared, though its destruction would have been a legitimate act of warfare. But Kinburn was vigorously bombarded, and on the 17th it surrendered. The garrison consisted of fourteen thousand men, of whom three hundred were killed and five hundred wounded. Eighty guns and much ammunition were taken by the Allies. The neighbouring fortress of Oczakoff was blown up and abandoned the next day.

The surrender of Kars.

In Asiatic Turkey the Russians were rewarded with a considerable success, which, though a very inadequate recompense for the loss of Sebastopol, did something to soothe the wounded pride of their Emperor and his Generals. The fortress of Kars, in Armenia, had been besieged by General Mouravieff since the beginning of June. The garrison was Turkish, but the officers were Englishmen.

Fenwick Williams.

General Williams, afterwards Sir Fenwick Williams of Kars, was in command. His defence of the town against superior numbers, and despite cruel privations, has made his name illustrious. His subordinates, Colonel Lake and Major Teesdale, will always be associated with him in fame. Basely deserted by Omar Pasha, the Turkish Commander-in-Chief, and ignored by Lord Stratford, to whom Fenwick Williams appealed, these gallant Britons, and the brave Turks whom they commanded, held out till the end of November, in circumstances which would have made men of ordinary courage despair. On Michaelmas Day, three weeks after the fall of Sebastopol, General Mouravieff made a determined attack upon the town. The key of the position was Fort Lake, called after the Colonel, and that was Moura-

vieff's object. But he completely failed. The fire from the batteries was so heavy, so well directed, and so continuously sustained, that the Russians were not only driven back, but left behind them an almost incredible number of dead and wounded. While the losses of the Turks did not exceed thirteen hundred, the number of Russians buried by the garrison after the fight was more than six thousand, besides all the killed and wounded who were taken away by their friends. Although General Kmety, a Hungarian officer, rendered valuable assistance, the glory of that day belongs to the gallant and skilful Williams of Kars.[1] But notwithstanding all the heroism of its garrison, Kars was doomed. No help came. Omar Pasha would not stir, and Salim Pasha, the Governor of Erzeroum, remained there. The distress of the garrison became so dire that buried animals were dug up and eaten. At last, on the 28th of November, when men, women, and children were daily dying of starvation, the famished garrison reluctantly surrendered. General Williams met General Mouravieff, who said to him, "General Williams, you have made yourself a name in history." The honours of war were readily granted. But the triumph of Russia was complete, and the Turkish army in Anatolia was wiped out. If Kars had remained Russian, it would have been better for the happiness of mankind. No one was more strongly impressed with the scandalous misgovernment of the Pashas in Asiatic Turkey than the heroic Englishman who had risked his life to defend them against the Giaour. "It is to be feared," said Sir Fenwick Williams, "that the next

1855.

Defeat of Mouravieff.

The meeting between Williams and Mouravieff.

[1] After the fight was over he said: "General Kmety, I thank you in the name of the Queen of England for your gallantry and exertions." Kmety had some reason for fighting in defence of Turkey. He was one of the refugees whom the Sultan would not give up to the Emperor Nicholas.

1855. time we go to war on account of Turkey, it will be for the spoils." He could not believe it possible that such iniquities as he had seen would be suffered by Western Europe to continue. To fight against Russia was one thing. To fight for Turkey was another.

END OF VOL. I

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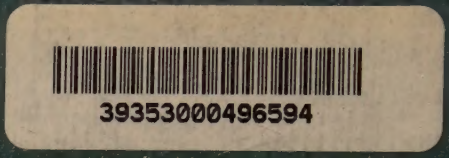
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